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The Holy Scriptures Analysed and Annotated

BY
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The New Testament

Volume II
Romans—Ephesians

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ROMANS

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The Epistle to the Romans.

Introduction.

The Epistle to the Romans is not the first Epistle which the Apostle Paul wrote. The First Epistle to the Thessalonians was written six years prior to the Epistle to the Romans, that is in 52 A. D. and the Second Thessalonian Epistle a few months later. The place given to this great document, immediately after the Book of Acts, is the right place, for the Epistle to the Romans has for its leading theme the Gospel of God, and that needs to be unfolded first of all. This Epistle was written by Paul in the year 58. Paul was staying in the house of Gaius (Rom. xvi:23). He was a wealthy Corinthian whom Paul had baptized (1 Cor. i:14). His amanuensis was Tertius, who makes the statement himself, "I Tertius, who wrote this Epistle, salute you in the Lord" (xvi:22). It was during the brief visit to Corinth (Acts xx:3) when the Apostle wrote the Epistle. He was on his way to Jerusalem, with the great desire in his heart "I must also see Rome" (Acts xix:21). Of this he speaks in the Epistle. "But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you, for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the Saints." (xv:23–25). And in the beginning of the Epistle he expressed the same wish. "Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (i:10–11). When a Greek Christian woman, Phoebe, was about to visit Rome, he was constrained to write this letter and she was undoubtedly the bearer of this Epistle. This we learn from Chapter xvi:1–2. "I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea (the port of Corinth); that ye receive her in the Lord, as becomes the Saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you; for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also." The genuineness of this Epistle has never been doubted. The critics have never been able to attack its authenticity. Universally it has been believed, and that from earliest time, to be the production of the Apostle Paul.

To Whom the Epistle was Written.

The Epistle is addressed "to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called Saints." There was then a church, a local assembly of believers in the great world city Rome. We do not know the facts of its origin.

The wicked system which goes by the name "the church of Rome" claims that Peter had much to do with the church there and was the first bishop in Rome. This is done to uphold the claims of the papacy. But it is a mere invention, lacking all historical support. Long before Paul ever addressed the Saints in Rome, Peter had made in Jerusalem declaration which confined his ministry to the circumcision (to Jews) while the Gentile field was left to Paul. "And when James, Cephas (Peter), and John who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me (Paul) and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles and they unto the circumcision" (Gal. ii:9). Peter wrote two Epistles addressed to scattered Jewish believers. He does what the Lord told him "to strengthen his brethren," and nowhere does he claim the exalted position into which the Romish apostate system has put him. That no Apostle had anything to do with the foundation of the local assembly in Rome seems fully established by Paul's statement in chapter xv:20. If Peter had anything to do with the church in Rome, if he had founded the church there, Paul would have certainly made some mention of him. And when later the Apostle Paul wrote his great prison Epistles, not a word did he say about Peter's presence and activity in Rome. These and other evidences are conclusive. Perhaps Jewish believers were used in carrying the gospel to the capital of the Roman Empire; or Gentile believers may have been the means of proclaiming first the good news there. While the assembly in Rome was composed of Jews and Gentiles, the latter were predominant, for the names mentioned in chapter xvi are nearly all Gentiles. Many of these may have been Jewish proselytes. That this church was also troubled with a Judaizing element, teachers who demanded the keeping of the law and circumcision as a means of salvation, may be learned from the warning exhortation at the close of the Epistle. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." (xvi:17). This may explain the different objections raised and answered in the Epistle, objections which would come mostly from a Jewish mind. See iii:1, 5, 7, 31; iv:1, vi:1, 15; vii:7; ix:14, 19, 30· xi:1, 11. However, there are conclusive proofs in the Epistle itself which show that the Gentiles were the more numerous in the Roman assembly. Paul addresses them as the Apostle of the Gentiles and in chapter xv:16 he writes, "that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit."

The Great Theme of the Epistle.

The great theme of Romans is the Gospel of God, that is the good news concerning the way which God, in His infinite love, has provided by which sinners are saved and all which this free and full salvation

includes. While this great theme has been recognized by all intelligent writers on this Epistle, various estimates have been given of the doctrinal unfoldings, which often miss the mark. Some have called Romans a religious treatise written by a man with a wonderful, logical mind, in which he explains his views concerning salvation. Others state that the letter is "the foundation document of the Pauline system of teaching" or they call it "the explanation of the Pauline theology." Still others have suggested that the Epistle to the Romans is "the personal mental history of the Apostle, in which, after his conversion, he worked his way from the old Jewish standpoint to his standpoint under the Gospel." But there is a far better statement which explains it all. In the sister Epistle of Romans, the Epistle to the Galatians, in which he gives the defence of the Gospel, Paul acquaints us with the origin of the Gospel, which he called so peculiarly "My Gospel."—"But I certify you brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i:11–12). The Gospel he preached and which is so wonderfully taught in the Epistle to Romans was given to him by revelation. It was not the product of a logical mind, a system of theology which he had thought out, or which some one else had taught him. It is revelation. And the proof of it is the Gospel itself. The mind of man could not have invented or discovered such a scheme. God Himself had to reveal it. The more a Christian studies this great Epistle concerning the Gospel of God, the more he will find out the truth that all is of God and not of man. A great thinker called Romans the profoundest document which has ever been written. It is that, because it is of God. And all that comes from Him is as inexhaustible as His Person. The things revealed in this Gospel of God are deep; no saint has ever sounded the depths. Yet it is simple the same time. This is always the mark of divine revelation, profundity and simplicity.

We shall point out more fully in the analysis the scope and division of this Epistle, how this great theme is unfolded. God reveals man's true condition, destitute of all righteousness, positively and negatively bad, the whole world guilty before God, Jew and Gentile lost. Upon that dark background God writes the story of His great Love. The source and center of all is the sacrificial work of Christ in which the righteousness of God is now manifested, no longer condemning the guilty sinner, but covering every sinner who believes in Jesus. Justification is by faith, and this faith which trusteth in Jesus is counted for righteousness. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (iv:5). And the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is also our justification; the blessed results of all this are seen in the opening verses of the fifth chapter. Being justified by faith we have peace with God, a secure standing in Grace and the hope of the Glory of God. The justification

of the sinner is the great foundation of the Gospel of God. Then follows an equally blessed revelation, which is another part of the Gospel. The justified sinner is constituted a Saint, and as such he needs deliverance from sin and its power. Up to chapter v:11 we learn how God has dealt with our sins and after that how He has dealt with sin. The believing sinner is no longer in Adam, the first man, but in Christ, the second man. What we have by nature through Adam and what we receive through Grace in being in Christ (by the new birth), this most wonderful contrast, is the subject in chapter v:12–21. God therefore does no longer behold the believer as in Adam, but he sees him in Christ; the old man has been put to death in the death of Christ "that the body of sin might be annulled that henceforth we should not serve sin." God looks upon the believer as being dead with Christ to sin. He is therefore no longer to live in sin. The assurance is given "sin shall not have dominion over you." And faith is to act upon it as being dead to sin and alive unto God (vi:11–13). In the seventh chapter the question of the law is raised and the Gospel of God declares that the justified believer, in Christ, dead with Him and delivered from the sin principle is also dead to the law. The eighth chapter leads us into the full place of deliverance. What was impossible to the law, to produce the righteous requirements of the law, is made possible by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The Spirit of God and His work in the believer is now revealed as a part of the Gospel. Furthermore the believer saved by Grace is a child of God and an heir of God. Glory is his eternal destiny and nothing can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Then follow three chapters which deal with dispensational matters, Israel's fall and coming restoration to the place of blessing as His earthly people. The final chapters contain exhortations to walk in the power of this blessed Gospel.

The Importance of Romans.

If we are asked what portion of the New Testament should a Christian study the most, we answer always, unhesitatingly, the Epistle to the Romans. Dr. Martin Luther found his great message and deliverance in this Epistle. No better testimony about this Epistle could be given than his. He said, "It is the true masterpiece of the New Testament, and the very purest Gospel, which is well worth and deserving that a Christian man should not only learn it by heart, word for word, but also that he should daily deal with it as the daily bread of men's souls. For it can never be too much or too well read or studied; and the more it is handled the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes." John Wesley, the godly preacher of the eighteenth century, found peace and deliverance while listening to the reading of Luther's introduction to Romans. No Christian can enjoy the Gospel and know true deliverance unless he knows the precious

arguments of the first eight chapters of this Epistle. It is the great need at the present time. So many professing Christians are ignorant of what redemption is and what it includes. Many have but a hazy view of justification and have little or no knowledge of a settled peace with God and lack the assurance of salvation. They are constantly striving to be something and to attain something, which God in infinite grace has already supplied in the Gospel of His Son. And the ignorance about deliverance from the power of indwelling sin! Most Christians live constantly in the experience of the wretched man in chapter vii:15–24. The teaching of the Gospel of God according to Romans is therefore of the greatest importance. It brings assurance and peace; its teachings lead the believer into a life of victory. So many sincere, but untaught believers become ensnared in all kinds of strange doctrines, taught by different cults, because they are deplorably ignorant of the salvation of God. Luther was right "it can never be too much or too well read or studied." Even if we have grasped the great doctrine of salvation as revealed in this Epistle it is needful that we go over them again and again. And it must be done with prayer. There are many Christians who hold the correct doctrines concerning justification and sanctification as made known in Romans, but they lack the power of these truths in their lives.

Nor must we forget that these blessed truths are increasingly denied as well as perverted in our days. We must therefore keep in constant touch with them, lest they slip away from us and we lose the reality and power of the blessed Gospel in our lives.

Division of the Epistle to the Romans.

The division of the Epistle is very simple and presents no difficulty. There are three very clearly defined parts. The first eight chapters contain the doctrine of the Gospel of God, what salvation is and what it includes. Justification, Sanctification and Glorification are revealed and the believer's deliverance from the guilt of sin, the power of sin and the future deliverance from the presence of sin is made known in these eight chapters. Chapters ix–xi form the second part. God's sovereign dealings with Israel is the theme of these chapters, which have a parenthetical character. Here we learn of Israel's election, rejection and coming restoration. God's righteousness is demonstrated in this second part as it is in the doctrinal section of this Epistle. Chapters xii–xvi constitute the third part. Here we find the exhortations for the justified and sanctified believer, who waits for the coming glory, how he is to live on earth in the power of the Gospel and manifest practically the righteousness of God.

I. DOCTRINAL. THE SALVATION OF GOD.
Chapters i–viii.

1. **Introduction.** Chapter i:1–17.
2. **The Need of Salvation Demonstrated. The Whole World Guilty and Lost.** Chapter i:18–iii:20.
3. **The Righteousness of God Revealed. Justification, What it is and What it Includes.** Chapter iii:21–v:11.
4. **In Christ. The Sanctification of the Believer; his Deliverance from Sin and the Law. Children and Heirs.** Chapter v:12–viii.

II. **DISPENSATIONAL. GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL.** Chapters ix–xi.

1. **Israel and God's Sovereignty.** Chapter ix.
2. **Israel's Failure and Unbelief.** Chapter x.
3. **Israel's Future.** Chapter xi.

III. **EXHORTATIONS AND THE CONCLUSION.** Chapter xii–xvi:13.

1. **The Exhortations.** Chapter xiii–xv:13.
2. **The Conclusion.** Chapter xv:14–xvi:27.

The Epistle to the Romans demands the closest study. "Its texture is so fine, its very vein so full, its very fibres and ligatures so fine and yet strong, that it requires not only to be again and again surveyed as a whole, and mastered in its primary ideas, but to be dissected in detail, and with unwearying patience studied in its minutest features, before we can be said to have done it justice. Not only every sentence teems with thought, but every clause; while in some places every word may be said either to suggest some weighty thought, or to indicate some deep emotion."* In the analysis and annotations we point out the way to the deeper study of the Epistle. But the most successful learners of these great truths are the men and women who walk in the truth and learn daily anew that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, who rejoice in God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

* D. Brown.

Analysis and Annotations.

I. DOCTRINAL. THE SALVATION OF GOD.

Chapter i–viii.

1. Introduction.

1. The Apostle and the Gospel of God. 1–6.
2. The Greeting. 7.
3. The Apostle's Prayer and Desire. 8–15
4. The Great Theme Introduced. 16–17.

Verses 1–6.—The introduction to the Epistle is unsurpassed by any other Epistle. Every word should be carefully studied. The writer introduces himself first of all as a servant (literally: slave) of Jesus Christ and called an apostle. Notice that in verses 1–7 two little words are found three times in italics, the words "to be." They are supplied by the translators and should be omitted. Paul was not called *to be* an Apostle, but he was called an Apostle. The Lord Jesus Christ was not declared *to be* Son of God, but He was declared Son of God; believers are not called *to be* Saints, but they are called Saints. Paul loved to call himself bondman of Jesus Christ. He knew the Lord had redeemed him and now he was no longer his own, but belonged to Him who had purchased him and made him one with Himself. His highest ambition was to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. His Apostleship he puts in the second place. The highest and best is to be in reality a willing, devoted servant of the Lord. How did he become an Apostle? "Not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ" (Gal. i:1).The exalted Christ in glory had called him and sent him forth. And next we find in the opening verse the specific work unto which the Lord had separated him—"separated unto the Gospel of God." The Gospel was his great commission and therefore is the great theme of his Epistle. The Holy

Spirit who guided his mind, as well as his pen, now unfolds this Gospel. The highest and the best, after all, in God's whole revelation is the Gospel. And the Gospel is not confined in the Pauline Epistles to Romans. We read Colossians and find there still the Gospel. The highest revelation which ever flowed through this chosen vessel is contained in the Epistle to the Ephesians; it is still the Gospel. Oh! the blessed Gospel! it can never be exhausted; it will be the object of eternal praise. In His presence, conformed into His image we shall know its heights and its depths.

Notice after Paul mentioned the Gospel of God there follows a parenthetical statement about that Gospel. Verse 5 is the continuation of what he saith about his Apostleship. The word Gospel means "good news." It is the good news of God, for it has its source in Himself and in His eternal counsel. The Gospel is also called the Gospel of Christ, because it centers in Him, and is proclaimed through His finished work on the cross. This Gospel was promised by God's Prophets in the Old Testament Scriptures. In many ways, in types, in the sacrifices, in direct predictions this Gospel has been announced and Jewish believers looked forward to its accomplishment. Throughout the Old Testament from Genesis iii to the Prophet Malachi the promises and predictions of the Gospel are found. The Old Testament is the foundation of the Gospel. The rejection of the Old Testament as the inspired Word of God is therefore a very serious matter. And the Gospel of God we learn next is a person. It is "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Jesus is the name of the Son of God in humiliation, living on the earth; Christ is His official name in resurrection and He is the Lord of all. The Lord Jesus Christ is the proper way to address Him. "Made of the seed of David according to the flesh." This brings before us His incarnation "made of a woman, made under law" (Gal. iv:4). He came of the seed of Abraham and from the house of David, according to divine promise. He was both David's Son and David's Lord, the Root and Offspring of David. To Him belongs a throne for He is the King of the Jews. But

"He came to His own and His own received Him not." He came to go to the Cross and finish the mighty work there which enables God to be just and a Justifier, as we shall find later. He will receive the throne when He comes again in great power and glory. And He is declared (marked out) the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. He lived in perfect holiness on earth and the Spirit of holiness was upon Him. He raised the dead and thereby demonstrated that He is the Son of God. But it is equally true that His own resurrection must be included in this statement, for His resurrection is the effectual justification of Himself as the Son of God. Trace in these opening verses all the great facts of Christ —Son of God—Son of Man—Incarnation—His Death—His Resurrection—His Lordship.

Verse 7.—Precious is the word of greeting to all the believers, not only in Rome, but everywhere. "Beloved of God called Saints." Such are all who have accepted Christ as their Saviour. They are justified, sanctified, and accepted in the Beloved. Blessed truth! in Christ, one with Him, we are the objects of the Love of God. The Love wherewith God loves His Son is the Love with which He loves all who belong to Christ (John xvii:23). And then we are Saints, not called to be, or to become Saints, by a separated life; but we are constituted Saints in Christ, sanctified, that is separated unto Himself. God loves us and in Christ has set us apart to Himself. Nothing that we do could ever make us the Beloved of God. No effort of ours to live consistently, apart from evil, could make us Saints of God. God has done it for us in Christ. And because we are Saints we can live saintly lives. The greeting is from the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is not mentioned, for He is in and with the Saints of God, both individually and also collectively forming the body, the church.

Verses 8–15.—In addressing them the Apostle has no rebuke, no evil to correct, no exhortation. Instead he thanked God that their faith was spoken of throughout the

whole world. They let their light shine brightly in the darkness of paganism. And His heart was filled with love for them. He thanked God for them, He prayed for His blessing upon them and that "by the will of God" he might be enabled to be with them. He longed to see them for mutual blessing. Here we have an illustration of Christian fellowship. Oftentimes he had purposed to come unto them, but was hindered. "The thwarted desires of Paul gave occasion to the Spirit of God to indite and publish, by his hand, this invaluable Epistle; to present to the Church a gift, not of present and passing effect, but which should build up and feed, and instruct, the Saints to the end of the time of the church's patience in the wilderness of this world." He felt, what every sinner, saved by Grace should feel, that he was a debtor to all. The possession of the Gospel makes us debtors to all. He had constantly discharged his debt by preaching the Gospel to the Jews and Gentiles and now he is eager "to preach the Gospel to you that are in Rome also." And can there be anything more blessed for the Saints than the Gospel? To be reminded of it and to be led deeper into the story of God's love and redemption is one of the great needs of God's people. Only as we do this can we be maintained in the reality and freshness of the Gospel. Therefore Paul longed to visit Rome to preach the Gospel to "the Beloved of God called Saints."

Verses 16–17.—These two verses are the key verses of the Epistle. The great words of the doctrinal part of the Epistle are found here. Righteousness and Faith are these words; Paul declared that he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. It cannot mean, what it is often said to mean, that Paul was not ashamed to confess Christ. It means that he had the utmost confidence in the Gospel of Christ; he knew it would not make him ashamed; he was not ashamed of it because of its intrinsic character. The world sneered at the Gospel he preached "for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (1 Cor. i:18). He knew that in the Gospel was embodied the highest wisdom, that God Himself was its author, that it came from God

and leads to God; he knew that through the Gospel the Greek, the Jew, the Barbarian could be saved out of the horrible pit and the miry clay and become a child of God and an heir of God. He was not ashamed of it for "the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation." What weighty words these are! The power of God is needed to save man. And that power God has, to save the vilest sinner through the Gospel of Christ. God is omnipotent, but in one thing God is powerless, He cannot save sinners apart from the Gospel of Christ, for the Gospel of Christ *is* the power of God unto salvation. The spurious Gospel of today, which denies the Cross of Christ and the blood, which substitutes character, good works or something else for faith in the Work of Christ as sin-bearer, has no power to save. God cannot save in any other way than the way made known in the Gospel of Christ, who died for our sins. And what is salvation? It includes the whole of Christ's redemption work. It includes Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification. Saved from the guilt of sins; saved from the power of sin; saved from the presence of sin. Salvation from wrath and eternal damnation; salvation from the power of darkness and sin's awful dominion; salvation unto eternal glory. The word includes all the sinner needs. The cross of Christ has supplied every need. If man had to do something with it and could help along in his salvation, it would be an imperfect and insecure salvation. But God being the author, it is His salvation and thus (Acts xxxiii:28) it is a perfect salvation, a salvation which is both deliverance and safety forever.* And this salvation is to any one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Faith is the means of obtaining this salvation. Of this we shall hear more in the third and fourth chapters. Furthermore, in the Gospel "the righteousness of God" is revealed. This great word will receive our closest attention in the annota-

* Phil. ii:12 "Work out your own salvation" is often quoted as meaning that we must work to be saved and to stay saved. It means that we are to work out with results the salvation which is ours by faith in Jesus Christ.

tions of the third chapter. Here we briefly state that the Gospel of Christ makes known that the very righteousness of God, which condemns a sinner, is now on the side of the believing sinner. It is revealed from faith to faith, which means that it is not on the principle of works, but on the principle of faith.

2. The Need of Salvation Demonstrated. The Whole World Guilty and Lost. Chapter i:18–iii:20.

CHAPTER I:18–32.

1. Wrath Revealed from Heaven. 18.
2. Gentile Knowledge of God. 19–20.
3. Turning from God to Idolatry. 21–23.
4. God Gave Them Up to Corruption. 24–32.

Verse 18.—God now demonstrates that the whole world is destitute of righteousness and needs salvation. Verse 18–iii:20 is parenthetical, showing the moral condition of the whole race, away from God and lost and therefore under wrath. In this verse we read that wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. It is a solemn declaration. All who are ungodly and unrighteous, who oppose the truth by living in sin are under wrath. And this is now shown to be the actual condition of the entire race, Gentiles and Jews. All are by nature the children of wrath (Eph. ii:3). A holy God must forever exclude from His presence those who are His enemies by wicked works.

Verses 19–20.—The heathen world in its moral history is first described. The heathen darkness which prevails now in idolatry and its attending degradations was preceded by the knowledge of God and produced by turning from God. Man can know God, in and through creation; His eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen in the things that are made. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard"

(Ps. xix:1–3). And there was no doubt also a primeval revelation, though unwritten, so that the Gentiles could know God.

Verses 21—23.—They knew God and glorified Him not. They turned away from the light. Here is the true law of evolution, not an evolution upward as taught so much at the present time, but an evolution downward. The ascent of man is a delusion; the descent of man is the truth. The only possible way of lifting man, who has fallen so low, yea beneath the beast, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "They became vain in their imaginations." The word imagination means, perverse, self-willed reasonings revealing the evil heart beneath from which they spring. Then their foolish heart was darkened. The next step down is that they professed themselves wise and became fools. Rejecting the light and turning away from God, they became philosophers and thought to find out things by searching. Idolatry was the next step. "A god, in some shape, is a natural necessity of man. His natural desire, in his first apostacy from truth, is a god after his own heart." A brief history of idolatry is given. First they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into a likeness of an image of corruptible man. But they did not stop with this, but they worshipped birds, four-footed beasts and creeping things. Birds, flying through the air, therefore considered nearer heaven, are put above the quadrupeds, which walk on the earth and the creeping things, which cannot rise out of the dust and mire of the earth are the lowest form. They worshipped the serpent, as it is still done by the Indians in Arizona. And idolatry is not confined to the heathen nations, it is practised in that great apostate system Romanism. A piece of bread, under an elaborate ritual, is lifted up and claimed to be changed by a few words of a sinful man, into the body and soul of the Son of God; then they fall down and worship. The mass is a blasphemous idolatry.

Verses 24–32.—Then moral corruption of the worst kind follows. They had given Him up and now He gives them up.

Three times we read that God gave them up. But why should there be a threefold repetition of the fact that He gave them up? Man is composed of body, soul and spirit. The first giving up is as to the body; this is found in verses 24–25. Then He gave them up to vile passions; this concerns the soul and the horrible things stated in verses 26–27 are the results. These were practised openly in the Greek and Roman world in the days of the Apostle Paul. Ancient literature bears abundant witness to that effect. These vile things are still going on in heathen India, China, Africa and elsewhere. They are found likewise in the midst of Christendom. Whenever and wherever the Truth of God is abandoned, degradation in every way follows, for the Truth of God alone can restrain evil. The third giving up is found in verse 29. Given up to a reprobate mind, which involves the spirit of man. "All these things spoken of here are clearly regarded as the recompense" even now, of the error of the creature, in departing from the Creator. "The world is thus regarded as under a judicial bondage of sin and dishonour. Men eat the fruit of their own ways, sometimes pleasant to the taste of corrupted nature, but with prospect of Divine and eternal judgment at the end. The very lusts which govern and torment the slaves of sin are, as it were, the earnest and token of that wrath of God, which, now revealed from heaven, will yet deal with ungodliness and unrighteousness of unrepentant sinners after death" (Heb. ix:27).*

Then follows a description of the sins, the fruits of a corrupt human nature, sins which were the characteristic features of heathendom when this Epistle was written. If we turn to 2 Tim. iii:1–5 we find a similar list, which corresponds in a striking way with the list at the close of the first chapter of Romans. There is, however, an important difference. As already stated Romans i:29–31 describes the moral condition of the heathen world in Paul's day, but 2 Tim. iii:1–5 describes the moral condition of the professing

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* Pridham on Romans.

Christian masses of the last times, church members who have the form of godliness and who deny the power thereof. They make an empty profession, their hearts are away from God and the last days of this age revert to the moral conditions in which the heathen world was in the days of the Apostle. And these characteristics prevail everywhere in Christendom. The last verse of our chapter tells us, that they know that they are worthy of death, yet they keep on in their evil ways.

CHAPTER II.

1. The Gentile Moralist and Reformer and His Condemnation. 1–6.
2. The Two Classes. 7–16.
3. The State of the Jew. 17–29.

Verses 1–6.—But in the heathen world there were such who gave witness against the immoral condition, the different vices. There were Moralists, Reformers and Philosophers like Socrates, Seneca and others. They judged and condemned certain evils. But God declares that they were not a whit better than the rest. The very things they condemned they were guilty of themselves. One of their own writers declared, "I see the good and approve of it and follow the evil." Thus they practiced evil, because the same evil heart was in them; in spite of their ethical writings, they were corrupt. And this is not confined to heathen moralists in the past, the same is true of others during this age, who judged existing evils and condemned them, while later they were found out to do the very things they condemned. Such is the unregenerated heart of man. They cannot escape the judgment of God. They were impenitent, despising the riches of His goodness and were treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the days of wrath.

Verses 7–16.—God is righteous and He will render every man according to his deeds. Then two classes are mentioned. The first are those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, and to that class God will give eternal life.* How is this to be

* Eternal life is here not, as in John's Gospel a present possession, but is that to be entered in after death.

applied? Does this answer the question how man is to be saved? It does not, but it is the question of God's moral government. Man in his unconverted state cannot obtain eternal life by patient continuance in well doing, for we read later that God's Word declares "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Man cannot seek for glory for it is written, "there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (iii:11). On these terms no human being can obtain eternal life. Man is a sinner and all the wages he can earn is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (vi:23). If eternal life is received by faith in Jesus Christ then man is able to do right and live the life that pleases God. Then there is the other class; those who obey not the truth, who live in unrighteousness, who reject His Word. Indignation and wrath is in store for such and this is the condition in which Jews and Gentiles are by nature "Among whom also we (Jews) all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others (Gentiles)" (Eph. ii:3). God states in these verses the principles on which He judges according to man's works, and as man is a sinner and cannot do good works, man is therefore under condemnation.

And likewise there is no respect of persons with God. The Jew may boast of a higher place than the Gentile, but God deals with all alike. The Gentiles had not the law and therefore sinned without law and they cannot escape the righteous judgment of God. They had the witness in Creation, as seen from the first chapter, and besides this there is conscience and that witnesses of what is sin; they have the knowledge of good and evil and are therefore morally responsible. They turned from God and they will be judged apart from the law; but it is more than that "they shall *perish* without the law." That completely answers the teaching that the mercy of God covers in some way the heathen world and that the heathen are not lost. And the Jews had the law and did not keep it. Could the

possession of the Law make them just before God? Certainly not, "for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the law to do them" (Gal. iii:10). And theirs will be the greater judgment, for they knew His will and did not according to His will and shall be beaten with many stripes (Luke xii:47). The entire passage deals with the judgment of a righteous God and that neither the Gentile without the law nor the Jew with the law is righteous before God, but that both classes most fall under the judgment of God. And there is a day appointed when this righteous judgment will be executed by the Son of Man, our Lord. And that none can be just by doing is seen in Paul's defence of the Gospel.

Verses 17–29.—Then the case of the Jew is more specially considered. He possessed the Law, the Holy Scriptures. And he rested in the law; the Apostle knew something of that in his own experience for he had declared "that touching the righteousness which is in the law" he thought himself "blameless." (Phil. iii:6). The Jew still does the same thing. He rests in the law and in the obedience to it for righteousness. But the law was never given for man to obtain righteousness. "For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. ii:16). The law was given to convict of sin and not as a means to obtain righteousness. All the outward righteousness of which the Jew boasted, especially in the strictest sect of the Pharisees, was but an attempt to cover the inward corruption of a heart which cannot bring forth the fruits of righteousness. The Scribes and Pharisees were "like unto white sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matth. xxiii:27). Self-righteous, despising others, condemning others—such was the state of the Jew, as he rested in the law, boasted of God and as being instructed out of the law. But the Spirit of God now uncovers his true condition. They violated that

law. All the sins forbidden by the law were secretly and publicly committed by them. They dishonoured God so much so that the name of God was blasphemed among Gentiles through them. Their whole history bears witness to all which is written in these verses. In Ezekiel's message we read that they profaned His name among the heathen (Ez. xxxvi:20–23). And this condition is the same among ritualistic, law and ordinance keeping, professing Christians, who are religious, but unsaved. They boast in what they do and what they possess and yet they live in sin, and their conduct belies their profession.

Especially did the Jew boast of his circumcision as a means of having favor with God, as nominal Christians trust in the sacraments as the means of salvation. But circumcision or ordinances cannot save man and make him right before God. And besides this, circumcision had become a reproach among the Gentiles, because the Jews had dishonoured God and denied the true meaning of circumcision. (Separation.) "Was circumcision of no use because of the dishonour put upon it? No, but that could not be counted such which was united with the transgression of that which it pledged one to keep. And the uncircumcised person keeping the commandments of the law would before Him be counted as circumcised. Israel, in fact, never contained all the sheep of the Lord's flock, as we know; and the apostle will presently remind us that Abraham himself was an example of the faith that might be in one uncircumcised. How indeed would the obedience of the uncircumcised condemn the man who, having both the letter of the law and circumcision also, yet violated the law! Plainly then, one must place what is internal and spiritual before what is external in the flesh. The true circumcision is spiritual and of the heart, and constitutes the true Jew, whose 'praise' (the word Jew means 'Praise') is found with Him who sees the heart."*

Outward observances have no value; it is the heart which needs circumcision. They boasted in circumcision and all

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* Numerical Bible.

the time denied and broke the law. Verse 29 is often misused by certain sects who claim that all the Jewish promises are now fulfilled in those who are Jews inwardly, that is Christians, and that Christians are the spiritual Israel and should keep the seventh day as Sabbath, etc. These arguments reveal ignorance in the scope of this Epistle. It is simply to prove the Jew with his boast in circumcision is lost. There is a circumcision of the heart, in the Spirit. Of this Paul wrote to the Philippians, "We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

CHAPTER III:1–20.

1. Objections and Their Answers. 1–8.
2. The Whole World Under Sin. 9–20.

Verses 1–8.—A number of objections are next raised and answered. "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" Such would be the natural question of the Jew after reading the argument that the Jew is on the same level with the Gentile. This objection is stated here for the first time. It is important, for the Jews are God's chosen people and as the Apostle states later, to them belongs "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises" (ix:4). If God puts Jews and Gentiles upon the same footing, what then becomes of all these peculiar blessings promised to the Jews? And in chapter xi the question comes up again. "I say then hath God cast away His people?" What superiority then hath the Jew? This question of a supposed objection is at once answered. The advantage of the Jew is "much every way." The chief advantage is stated "unto them were committed the oracles of God." They possessed what the Gentiles did not have, the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God. What we call now the Old Testament is therefore the Word of God, in which God spoke to His covenant people. And in these oracles of God are found the great promises for that race, which await their glorious fulfillment in the day of their national restoration.

Another objection comes next. And this is also met and answered (Verses 3–4). All did not believe, but that does not make the faithfulness of God void for those who do believe. God does not fail those who put their trust in Him, because others did not believe. Part of the answer is from David's penitential Psalm (Ps. li:4). David justified God, declared that He was true and then condemned himself. In the day of judgment it will be found that God is true and every man a liar. But this second objection leads to still another one, which is also answered by the Apostle (Verse 5–6). But if our unrighteousness commend God's righteousness, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who inflicteth wrath? If that were true, that He needs our sins for the praise of His righteousness "then how shall God judge the world?" But more than that. They had accused the Apostle and others of saying, "Let us do evil, that good may come?" If it were true that our unrighteousness commends God's righteousness, then this slanderous statement would be perfectly right. For if our sins help to glorify God, why should we be judged for them? But the Apostle brands it as utterly false. For those who sin on such a principle awaits a damnation (judgment) which is just.

Verses 9–20.—We have seen that the previous verses considered possible objections to the arguments of the preceding chapter. Verses 1–8 have therefore a parenthetical character. And now we come to the summary. Gentiles and Jews were proven to be absolutely unrighteous and therefore guilty and lost. The judgment wrath of a righteous God is upon them who had no law and upon them who possessed the law. The verdict of the Oracles of God is given. The following Scripture passages are quoted to confirm all that has been said: Psalm xiv:1–3; liii:1–3; v:9; cxi:3; x:7; Isaiah lix:7–8; Ps. xxxvi:1. The whole human race is proven to be negatively and positively bad; nothing good and everything bad is in man. Read carefully these positive statements. We need to be reminded of them in a day when almost universally the truth of man's

lost condition is disbelieved, and when religious teachers constantly speak of "a better self," "a divine spark," "the germ of good"; when thousands follow the unscriptural teaching of a Fatherhood of God apart from true and saving faith in the Lord Jesus. Therefore read what God saith about the condition of his fallen creature. "There is *none* righteous, no, not one";—"There is *none* that understandeth, there is *none* that seeketh after God";—"there is *none* that doeth good, no, not one." How positive are these statements. And it is blessed to read in the Scriptures that God knows all the depths of sin into which we have been plunged. God knows all and here He shows us the true picture of ourselves. "Wherefore by works of law shall no flesh be justified before Him; for through law is knowledge of sin." Men try to do something to meet God's requirements, but they cannot do that. All human efforts in doing good works are futile. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. And they that are in the flesh cannot please God. By deeds of law, all kinds of religious observances and good works, no flesh shall be justified before Him. Thus ends the revelation concerning man guilty and lost. The whole world is proven under sin. Man cannot save himself. If there is salvation it must come from God. Upon this dark, dreary background a righteous God now flashes forth the wonderful story of redeeming love.

3. The Righteousness of God Revealed. Justification, what it is and what it Includes. Chapter iii:21–v:11.

CHAPTER III:21–26.

1. The Righteousness of God Manifested. 21–22.
2. Just and Justifier. 23–26.
3. Not of Works but of Faith. 27–31.

Verses 21–22.—And now God comes forward and manifests His righteousness. Verse 21 must be connected with chapter i:17. As previously stated chapter i:18 -iii:20 is a parenthesis proving all the world destitute of righteousness and therefore guilty. Righteousness of God as revealed in

the Gospel was the statement in chapter i:17 and it is this which is brought more fully in view. The term "Righteousness of God" is much misunderstood. Not a few think it is the righteousness of Christ (a term nowhere used in Scripture) which is attributed to the believing sinner. They teach that Christ fulfilled the law, lived a perfect life on earth and that this righteousness is given to the sinner. All this is unscriptural. Righteousness cannot be bestowed by the law in any sense of the word. If the holy life of the Son of God, lived on earth in perfect righteousness, could have saved man and given him righteousness, there was no need for Him to die. "If righteousness came by the law then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. ii:21). It is God's righteousness which is now on the side of the believing sinner; the same righteousness which condemns the sinner, covers all who believe. And this righteousness is revealed in the Gospel. God's righteousness has been fully met and maintained in the atoning work of Christ on the Cross. By that wonderful work God is now enabled to save sinners and to save them righteously. The righteousness of God is therefore first of all revealed in the Gospel of Christ. Apart then from the law righteousness of God is manifested, the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ. And this righteousness now revealed was also witnessed to by the law and the prophets. The law of the different sacrifices, insufficient in themselves to take away sins, pointed to the great sacrifice, in which God would be fully glorified as well as His righteousness satisfied. There were many types and shadows. Now since the righteousness of God is fully made known in the Gospel we can trace God's wonderful thoughts and purposes in the types and histories of the Old Testament. To deny that the law testified to the coming redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ is to deny the Gospel itself. And this is done in the camp of higher criticism. But the Prophets also witnessed to it (Isaiah xli:10; xlvi:13; li:5, 6, 8; lvi:8). It is blessed to see that the Prophet Isaiah who has the most to say concerning the sufferings of Christ, also witnesses to the righteousness which should follow. "Though

your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Is. i:18). "Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake and will not remember thy sins "(Is. xliii:24–25). "A just God and a Saviour" (Is. xlv:21). "His Name . . . the Lord our righteousness" (Jer. xxiii:6). The old, old question never fully answered "how should man be just with God?" is now solved. Thus the Oracles of God witness to the righteousness of God. And this righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ is "unto all and upon all them that believe." It is unto all, which means that the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ is sufficient to save all. The whole world may be saved. It is "upon all that believe," which means that only those who believe on Christ are covered by the righteousness of God and are justified.

Verses 23–26.—"Being justified freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Christ has met all, He paid for all our sins. If we believe on Jesus we are justified freely by His Grace, that is, as a free gift. And justification is acquittal; we are acquitted from sin and from any charge of it. "It is divine righteousness that acts in justifying; righteousness is just that attribute of God which is concerned in it. It is like a broad, effectual shield stretched *over the believer*, and *for all* like a house that with its open door invites men to take shelter from the coming storm of judgment." The redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ has satisfied every claim forever. Christ has paid the price and all who believe are fully acquitted from every charge and penalty. "Whom God hath set forth a mercy seat through faith by His blood." On the day of atonement on the mercy seat, overshadowed by the Cherubim, the blood was sprinkled. And now the better blood, that which alone can take away sin, is upon the mercy seat, and God is faithful and just on account of that blood, to justify the believer.

"To declare His righteousness in respect of the passing

by the sins that had taken place before, through the forbearance of God." The sins that had taken place before, does not mean the sins committed before the conversion of an individual believer. It means the sins of believers before Christ had come and died. When sins were forgiven in Old Testament times God's gracious forbearance was manifested, but when Christ had paid the great redemption price, when His blood had been shed, then God's righteousness was made manifest in having declared righteous believers, who lived before Christ had died. In view of what God's blessed Son would do, a righteous God forgave the sins of all who believed. And now God is just; His righteousness is unchanged and fully maintained and as the just God He is the justifier of Him that believes on Jesus. The justification of the believer is fully consistent with the righteousness of God. Negatively stated "what if God were not to justify, declare free, a sinner who believes in Jesus?" Then God would not be just to the blood of Christ. And in view of these wonderful revelations of the Gospel of Christ, so far above man's wisdom, God-like from start to finish, how awful the rejection of this blessed Gospel, as well as the perversion of it! Surely a righteous God must deal with such in judgment of eternal wrath.

Verses 27–31.—Boasting from man's side is excluded. The law could do nothing but condemn man. The principle of simple faith excludes all boasting. "Not of works lest any man should boast." It is all of God and therefore all the praise belongs to Him. And there is another question. God justifies the circumcision (the Jews); He justifies the uncircumcision by faith (Gentiles). "Do not we then make void the law by faith? Far be the thought! No, but we establish the law." The law is not made void but established by the Gospel, not in the sense that it is to help the sinner. The broken law and its curse was borne by Christ; therefore the law has been vindicated as well as the holiness and righteousness of God. The man who tries to be right with God by the works of the law makes the law void, for he will not live up to the letter of the law, as the law demands

and excuses his failures at the expense of the law, which is holy and good.

CHAPTER IV.

1. The Witness of Abraham to Justification. 1–5.
2. As Confirmed also by David. 6–8.
3. Circumcision the Sign of the Covenant. 9–12.
4. Faith in Him Who Raiseth the Dead. 13–25.

Verses 1–5.—Two witnesses are summoned next in whose lives the truth of justification by faith is illustrated. The Jews boasted of Abraham as the father of their nation. "Abraham our father" is still the common phrase used by all orthodox Jews as it was in the days of John the Baptist, as he declared, "Say not within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father." How then was Abraham counted righteous before God? Was he justified by keeping the law? That was impossible for the law was 430 years after Abraham. He was not justified by works. He was a sinner like every other human being. He had no works to justify him. But what saith the Scripture? "Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Abraham simply believed God when He gave him a promise (Gen.xv: 5–6) and God said, you have no righteousness, but I take your faith instead of righteousness. Faith was reckoned to him for righteousness. There is then a difference between the righteousness of God in the previous chapter and the righteousness imputed in this chapter. And a blessed statement it is "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungoldy, his faith is reckoned for righteousness." Abraham did not work. To him that worketh not, God reckons a reward. And what a reward. What God puts on the side of him, who believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, will only be fully known when redeemed sinners are in His presence. "The glory which Thou has given me I have given Them" (John xvii:22). This wonderful utterance of our Lord tells us of the great reward in store for him that worketh not, who as ungodly believes on Christ, who died for the ungodly. Thus faith is reckoned for righteousness and has its reward of glory

through grace. The statement in Galatians iii:6–9 must be studied in connection with these verses. "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with believing Abraham."*

Verses 6–8.—And David is the second witness. David and Abraham are mentioned in the first verse of the New Testament. The covenant God made with Abraham and with David make these two men the leading men of the nation. Now Abraham had no law, but David was under the law. David describeth the blessedness of the man (whosoever he may be) to whom God imputes the righteousness without works. The beautiful xxxii Psalm is quoted. The blessedness of the believer is there described. Iniquities forgiven; sins covered; sin no longer imputed. He does not impute sin, but imputes righteousness. Forgiveness takes the place of sin, and everlasting righteousness has covered the believer's iniquity, hiding it alike from the eyes of Divine glory, and from the conscience of the justified vessel of His grace; and significantly it is stated in that Psalm "for this cause shall *every one that is godly* pray unto Thee in the time when Thou mayest be found." This is the way to be godly, confessing ourself a sinner, confessing sin and believing on Him, who justifieth the ungodly.

Verses 9–12.—The question of circumcision is raised again. The Jew boasted in circumcision as placing him into a position of favour and blessing before God. Is this blessedness, justification by faith, sins put away, righteousness imputed, for the circumcision, the Jews, only, or does it come also upon the uncircumcision, the Gentiles? When Abraham was declared righteous he was still in uncircumcision. The

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* In Galatians analysed and annotated this statement is more fully explained.

historical account in Genesis shows that circumcision followed the declaration "he believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness;" circumcision did not precede his faith which was reckoned to him for righteousness. He was in uncircumcision, practically a Gentile, and circumcision was a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith. All this manifests the wisdom of God. It was divinely arranged so that Abraham "might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised (Gentiles) that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had being uncircumcised." Here we have the best possible argument that ordinances, or sacraments so called by man, have no part in bestowing salvation upon man. Baptism is called "a sacrament" and ritualistic Christians hold that it is necessary to receive the blessing of forgiveness. Others who do not hold to corrupt ritualism, also teach that Baptism as an ordinance is necessary for salvation. This portion of the Epistle answers completely these unscriptural claims. "For by Grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii:8–9).

Verses 13–25.—This section is of deep interest and must be carefully studied. While we had the atoning death of Christ so far before us, resurrection is now brought to the foreground as another important fact of the Gospel. The faith of Abraham is defined. How did he believe? When the promise was given that he should have a son and numerous offspring (Gen. xv:4–5), he believed God, who quickeneth the dead (resurrection) and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Abraham was an old man and Sarah was far beyond the time of childbirth; their case was humanly impossible. But Abraham believed that God could bring life from the dead, that He had the power to touch a grave and bring life out of it. "Against hope he believed in hope—and being not weak in faith he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years.

old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to GOD; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." From Genesis we know that he was also weak in faith and that he acted in unbelief. But this is graciously passed by. God, so to speak, had forgotten his unbelief and remembered it no more.

The application of all this is found in verses 23–25. The promised seed was more than Isaac, it was Christ; so that Abraham believed the God who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. And we believe on Him also. Our Lord was delivered for our offences and has been raised for our justification. His resurrection is the blessed and positive proof that our sins are completely put away. For this reason the resurrection of Jesus, our Lord, is the justification of the believer. We have then a threefold justification of the believer. We are justified by His blood; He bore our guilt and penalty. We are justified by His resurrection, because this assures us that the work is done and we are accepted, and we are justified by faith, which is reckoned for righteousness.

CHAPTER V:1–11.

1. What Justification Includes. 1–11.

The blessed results of justification are next revealed. What justified believers possess and what they may enjoy is the theme of the opening verses of this chapter. The first thing mentioned is that all who are justified by faith have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace was made in the blood of the Cross, He who died for our sins is our peace. His greeting to the assembled disciples on the resurrection day was "Peace be unto you" and then He showed unto them His hands and His side and again He said, "Peace be unto you." This peace with God we have as believers in Christ. It is settled forever and can never be disturbed. Some times Christians ask others if they made their peace with God. They mean by it, turning away from sin,

repentance, conversion, surrender, etc., as if those actions from our side could make peace with God. This is incorrect and the reason why so many professing Christians lack the assurance that they have peace with God is in this very fact, that they are constantly trying what they term "to be right with God." Peace does not need to be made, it was made when Christ died for our sins. And into this peace we enter when we believe on the Lord Jesus and are justified freely of all things. We may live sober, earnest and useful Christian lives for fifty years or longer and at the end of such a devoted life we have not more of the peace with God than we had the moment we trusted in Christ. And our failures and stumbling walk as the "beloved of God, called Saints" our sinning, can never disturb and undo that peace.

The second result is that we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand. We have a perfect standing before God in Christ, and perfect access. We stand in grace, accepted in the beloved One and this grace keeps and sustains. We are the children of God made nigh by blood; Grace makes us nigh. We can draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Our faithfulness cannot increase this standing in Grace, nor can our unfaithfulness decrease it, for the simple reason that it is Grace. The third result of justification is "the hope of the glory of God" in which we can now boast. The only title to glory is the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ has secured the glory for us and has made us sharers of His own glory He received from God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. People speak of fitting themselves for heaven by living good lives. No one can be fitted for heaven. The only fitness is the new nature, received in the new birth. And that nature is given to the justified believer when he is justified by faith. That there are special rewards for sacrificing service is very true, but to be in glory is a matter of grace and is given along with justification. The glory of God is the Hope of righteousness (Gal. v:5). These three things cover the past, the present and the future.

Past; Peace was made. Present; Standing in this Grace. Future; The Hope of the Glory of God. The approach to God in the tabernacle illustrates this beautifully. First the brazen altar, the type of the sacrifice of Christ; then the laver for washing, the candlestick, the table—typifying the cleansing, light, food and fellowship, the grace wherein we stand. Then behind the veil the glory of Jehovah, which ere long God's people shall reach when He calls them home. How happy God's people should be in possession of such precious things with the knowledge of sins forever put away!

But we are still in the wilderness and there are tribulations. And in tribulations, as justified and assured of the glory of God, we can even boast (the word used in the Greek) in them. Tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed. "Here is how that which is against us works for us; and notice that the very first thing effected is the breaking down of our own wills, those wills, that Jacob-like struggle so much with the will of God. Sovereign He must be; and spite of all that we have known of Him, it is what in practical detail we so little want Him to be. Amid the clouds and darkness that encompass Him in His providential dealings faith that should find its opportunity finds oftentimes bewilderment and perplexity; yet in it we are forced to recognize our nothingness, and creep close to the side of Him who yet goes with us. Forced to let God be God, it is then that we get experience of a moral government which is that of a Father. The *forcing* of outward things comes to be read as *drawings* of Omnipotent Love that seeks us for its own delight. His ways, if still they may be beyond us, are not strange and still less adverse. They beget, not fear or misgiving, but a brightening hope, that steadies as it brightens."*

In verse 5 the Holy Spirit is mentioned for the first time in this Epistle. The highest truth is not the work of the Spirit in the believer, but the work of Christ for the believer.

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* F. W. Grant.

The Holy Spirit is here to take of the things of Christ and to show them unto us. Once more therefore Christ and His finished work and the outflow from it are mentioned. God commending His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Justified by His blood we shall be much more saved from wrath through Him. All believers are exempt from the wrath to come because they are one with Him who is the administrator of the judgments of God. And there is a second much more. Reconciled by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life, the life which is in God's own presence and which is in us, for He is our life. And the very highest result, the joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the reconciliation.

4. In Christ. The Sanctification of the Believer; his Deliverance from Sin and the Law; Children and Heirs.

Chapter v:12–viii.

CHAPTER V:12–21.

1. Sin and Death Through the First Adam. 12–14.
2. In Adam by Nature; in Christ Through Grace. 15–21.

So far the subject of this Epistle has been our sins and how God has dealt with them in the Cross of Christ. The guilt and penalty of the sins of the believer are forever gone. With this section the question of sin itself is taken up and we learn how the justified believer is also sanctified in Christ and as such delivered from the dominion of sin and from the law. Furthermore we learn it also includes that believers are children and heirs of God. To distinguish between sins and sin is important. Sin is that evil principle in us, as fallen creatures, and sins are the fruits which spring from the evil root in us. Sin, the old nature, and how God deals with it in virtue of the redemption of Jesus Christ, is now, first of all, revealed. What we were in Adam and what we are through grace in Christ, how as identified with Christ we may be delivered from the power of indwelling sin, are truths unknown to many believers. Without this knowledge a true Christian experience, such which a believer

should constantly enjoy, is impossible. One of the chief reasons why true believers are carried about with divers and strange doctrines, is the ignorance of these great facts of our redemption in Christ as unfolded in this part of Romans. How many others are constantly striving and struggling to lead a spiritual life and fail in it because they know not the great principles of sanctification and deliverance in Christ.

Verses 12–14.—"Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death and thus death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." By one man, the first Adam, sin entered into the world (not sins, but *sin*). And death followed, which is physical death. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," and this death has passed upon the race because of sin. The margin of the authorized version contains a statement which is responsible for a very unscriptural teaching. The margin states "in whom all have sinned"; upon this it has been taught that the guilt of Adam has been imputed to all. This is not correct. We are not responsible for the sin of Adam nor are we held responsible by God for a sinful nature; we are responsible for the outworking of that nature, that is for our own sins. The wicked dead, those whose sins were not taken away, because they believed not, will not be judged for having had a sinful nature, but solely according to their works (Rev. xx:12). Death comes upon us on account of our sins, as it is stated in this verse "death passed upon all men for that all have sinned.

"For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law; nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him to come." This looks difficult, but it is simple after all. The law was given by Moses; from Adam to Moses there was no law, men were left to conscience, by which they knew good and evil. But death reigned nevertheless from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Adam

had a commandment which he transgressed, inasmuch as there was no law till Moses, the generations could not sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Sin is lawlessness and not as the faulty translation of 1 John iii:4 states, "sin is the transgression of the law." However, sin becomes transgression when there is a law. As there was no law from Adam to Moses, sin was therefore not imputed as transgression. But as they all sinned, death reigned and there is also judgment afterwards for them. The last sentence of verse 14 "who is the figure of Him that was to come" is the important statement which is fully developed in the verses which follow and upon which the whole argument rests.

Verses 15–21.—The first Adam is the type of the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. The same comparison is also found in 1 Cor. xv "For as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive" (verse 22). This passage has often been used by those who teach the ultimate, universal salvation of the whole race. It has nothing whatever to do with salvation from the penalty of sin, but it applies to the resurrection of the bodies of the redeemed. Here in Romans the contrast is of a different nature. Adam and Christ are viewed as two heads, having each his offspring to whom they communicate something. The first Adam bestows upon his offspring the results of his sin; Christ, the last Adam,* bestows upon those who belong to Him, by personal faith in Him, the blessed consequences of His great work. A sinful nature and physical death is what we have as the children of the first Adam. In Christ the believer receives a sinless nature, eternal life and glory. In this sense Adam is the figure of Him to come.

"But shall not the free gift be as the offence?"† By the offence of Adam the many died, his offspring has been

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* Christ is never called the second Adam, but the last Adam, as there will not be another after Him.

† The first sentence of verses 15 and 16 is best put in the form of a question. This helps much in understanding this deep portion of the Epistle.

affected by his offence. In like manner the grace of God and the gift of Grace, which is by the other Adam, Jesus Christ abounds also to the many. The question asked must therefore be answered in the affirmative. This and the following verses have also been used to teach that there is universal salvation. But it does not mean that. The condition "faith in Christ" must not be lost sight of. We are all in the first Adam by the natural birth; identification with the second Man is only possible by the new birth and that takes place when a sinner believes on Christ and in His finished work. Those who do not believe are in Adam and are dead in trespasses and sins. "And shall not as by one that has sinned be the gift? For the judgment was of one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification" (verse 16). The sins committed are here in view. Our sin brought judgment. The free gift of justification, on account of Christ's atoning sacrifice, is blessedly sufficient to deliver from the guilt of many offences. "For if by the offence of one death reigned by the one; much more shall those who receive the abundance of grace, and of the free gift of righteousness, reign in life by the one, Jesus Christ" (verse 17). The previous verse spoke of the guilt of sins, which rests upon all those who are in Adam and this guilt is met in Christ by justification. In verse 17 death which reigns in the first man is met by reign of life in Jesus Christ. Those who believe on Him have life now and are delivered from the reign of death. When He comes, the bodies of His Saints will be raised in incorruption and we who remain shall be changed in a moment and be caught up into His presence without dying. Verse 18 in the Authorized version is poorly translated and misleading. "So then as it was by one offence towards all men to condemnation, so by one righteousness towards all men to justification of life." This blessed contrast between Adam and Christ is made again in verse 19. "For as indeed by the disobedience of the one man (Adam) the many have been constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many shall be constituted righteous." Here it is the con-

trast between Adam's disobedience and Christ's obedience. And the obedience of Christ which constitutes all who believe on Him righteous, is not His obedient life, but His obedience in the death of the cross. "But law came in in order that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded grace overabounded, in order that, even as sin has reigned in the power of death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here for the first time a reason is given why God gave the law. The Epistle to the Galatians will bring the subject of Law and Grace more fully to our attention. Law came in that the offence might abound; it has constituted man a transgressor and in this sense the offence abounds. But grace overbounds. It deals with the transgressions and reigns through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Wonderful and preciously deep contrast! In Adam sin, condemnation and death. In Christ righteousness, justification and eternal life; yea much more, eternal glory. In Adam we have his constitution; in Christ we possess through grace His life and glory.

CHAPTER VI.

1. Dead with Christ to Sin. 1–7.
2. Risen with Christ and Alive to God. 8–11.
3. Sin shall Not Have Dominion. 12–14.
4. Servants to Righteousness. 15–23.

Verses 1–7.—We have learned from the previous chapter that the justified believer is in Christ and fully identified with Him. God sees the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, no longer in Adam, but in Christ, the head of a new creation. "So if any one be in Christ, it is a new creation the old things have passed away, behold all things have become new" (2 Cor. v:17). Judicially the believer therefore is dead to sin, the old man was crucified, put completely to death in the death of Christ, and the believer is alive to God in Him. But this wonderful part of the Gospel must become a reality in the life and experience of the believer. God beholds us as dead to sin in Christ and alive in Himself,

this must be lived out. This is the solemn responsibility of the justified believer. And we are not to do this in our own strength, but in the power of the indwelling Spirit, who is also given to the believer. All this is unfolded in this chapter.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Inasmuch as we have died to sin in the death of Christ, the practical deliverance of sin and its dominion must be manifested in our lives. As we find later the old nature, the flesh is still in the justified believer, but he has also another nature, another life and he is therefore enabled in the power of that new life and his identification with Christ, to continue no longer in sin. It is a most positive fact "dead to sin" and this is true of all believers positionally in Christ, and therefore the Holy Spirit tells us that we should no longer live therein. And this truth is illustrated in Christian baptism; it is into Christ's death and illustrates the truth of death and burial in Christ. Baptism therefore does not save. It has no power to put a sinner in Christ, nor can it convey forgiveness of sins and impart the new life. Faith alone is needed for that, and when the sinner believes the grace of God saves and accomplishes identification with Christ. And furthermore we are more than dead and buried with Christ "as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." We share in His resurrection. What the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ did to Him, raising Him from the dead, He does to all who believe on Him. "He hath raised us up together" (Eph. ii:5). We possess His life, the risen life and therefore we should also walk in the power of this life. Our old man (what we are in Adam), was crucified with Christ. When He died we also died. Our old man was crucified with Christ "that the body of sin might be annulled, so that we should be slaves to sin no longer." Many have been misled by the mistranslation which states "that the body of sin might be destroyed" and teach that the old nature is completely eradicated.

But it does not say destroyed, but annulled, or cancelled. The body of sin is our mortal body with the law of sin in its members. And as long as we have this mortal body, the law of sin is in its members. But the operation of that law is annulled for the believer, who in faith, as we shall see later, reckons himself to be dead unto sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. And therefore the believer is enabled to be no longer a slave to sin, as the natural man is. A dead man is justified or discharged from sin; the tyrant's power is at an end when the subject over which he domineers is dead. And so we being crucified with Christ escape the tyrant's power and ultimately when the Lord comes this mortal body will be changed and sin itself will be forever gone.

Verses 8–11.—Inasmuch as we have died with Christ we shall also live with Him. Death hath no more dominion over Him; He liveth unto God. And all this is true of the believer. Then comes the most important answer to the question raised, in the beginning of the chapter. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" "In the same manner reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." This is an exhortation to take hold of this great and deep truth, the identification of the believer with Christ in death and resurrection. Reckon is an act of faith. It means to believe all this and to appropriate in faith what God has put on our side in Christ Jesus. We must reckon that we are dead and in possession of the life which enpowers us to live unto God. "We reckon this is so, not feel it to be so. It is an entire mistake, and fraught with important consequences, to imagine this being dead to sin to be a feeling or an experience. We cannot *feel* Christ's death on the cross, and it was there He died to sin, and *we* because He died. If it were experience, it would be an absolute perfect one, no evil thought, feeling, or desire, ever in the heart; and this not true of some of the more advanced, but of all Christians and that always. But this is contrary to the experience of all. The attempt to produce such a condition in ourself ends either in the misery of utter failure, or, still worse, in self-satisfaction, indeed, the

well-nigh incredible delusion for a Christian, that he is as impassive to sin as Christ Himself! The words do not express such an experience.* In every way, it is plain that it is not an experience of which the apostle is speaking here. We could not be told to reckon what we experience. What we reckon is a fact for faith, the fruit of the work done for us, not of that done in us. Because Christ died unto sin once for all, and in that He liveth, liveth unto God, thus also do we reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus."†

Verses 12–14.—The exhortation which follows in verse 12 addressed not to the world, but to justified believers, proves that sin is still in the mortal body of the believer. It is not destroyed. But while sin is in our mortal body, it has no more right to reign there. However it will reign, if we yield to the desires of the old nature. If a believer obeys the old nature in its lusts he walks not in the Spirit but in the flesh. Whenever temptation comes the believer must take refuge in prayer, in self-judgment and self-surrender and yield (or present) his members afresh as instruments of righteousness unto God. As long as the believer is in the mortal body there is the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit (Gal. v:17). And if we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh; this necessitates that we make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof (Rom. xiii:14). Furthermore, the promise is given to the believer in Christ that sin shall not have dominion over him because he is not under the law, but under grace. The grace which has saved the believing sinner and made Him nigh unto God, teaches also to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age (Titus ii:12). And more than that; grace supplies the power to live godly. Therefore sin shall not have dominion over a believer because he is under grace. But this promise must be appropriated in faith.

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*As claimed by Perfectionists and Holiness sects.

†Numerical Bible.

Verses 15—23.—Another question is asked. "What then, shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace?" Another, "God forbid"—perish the very thought of it—is the answer. Whoever yields to sin falls under the mastery of sin. Then follows a word of praise. He thanks God that the believers to whom he writes, once servants of sin, but having obeyed from the heart (and true faith is obedience), they were made free from sin and became servants of righteousness. "Free from sin" does not mean, as often taught, free from the old nature, but free from the domineering power of indwelling sin. Then there is the contrast between the former state in sin and the place of deliverance into which grace has brought the believer. In the former life as unsaved, slaves of sin, there was an awful fruit and the end of it is death. But now as servants of God, freed from sin's awful slavery, there is another fruit, the fruit of holiness and the end eternal life. How this fruit of the justified believer is to be produced we shall learn in the next chapter. Sin's wages is death; that is what man receives in payment for sin. Eternal life, the great and inestimable gift of God is bestowed through Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHAPTER VII.

1. The Law and its Dominion. 1–3.
2. Dead to the Law and Married to Another. 4–6.
3. Concerning the Law; its Activities and Purpose. 7–13.
4. The Experience of a Believer in Bondage to the Law. 14–24.
5. The Triumphant note of Deliverance. 25.

Verses 1–3.—The law is now more fully taken up. We have learned before that by the works of the law no man can be justified before God. But when the sinner is justified by faith, does he need the law to please God? Can obedience to the law produce in him the fruit of holiness unto God? What is the relation of the justified believer to the law? Is he still under the dominion of the law or is he also delivered from the law and its bondage? These questions are answered in this chapter. An important principle is stated in the first verse. The law has dominion

over a man as long as he lives. The law has dominion over man (both Jews and Gentiles). The law, which is holy, just and good (verse 12) condemns man, his sinful nature and the fruits of that sinful nature, and in this sense it has dominion over every man and holds him in its grasp. But when death takes place the rule of the law is broken. It cannot touch a dead man. The penalty of the broken law is death, when that sentence is executed, the law can have no longer dominion.

An illustration from the marriage law as instituted by God is given to make this clear. Husband and wife are united in a union till death dissolves it. The married woman is bound by that law to her husband as long as he lives. When he dies she is free and can be married to another. And we are become dead to the law by the body of Christ. The body of Christ means the death of Christ on the Cross. On the cross He bore the judgment which is our due. He bore the penalty and the curse of the law for us. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. iii:13). The penalty of the broken law has been met and the law is vindicated. Inasmuch, then as His death is our death, in that we died with Christ, the law can have no more dominion over us; "we are dead to the law by the body of Christ."

Verses 4–6.—The old union is dissolved. Death has done its work and it is now possible after being freed from the law to be married to another. In Galatians the question about the law and its authority is viewed from another side. The law was the schoolmaster unto Christ; now after faith is come, the full truth concerning redemption by the death of Christ is made known, we are no longer under a schoolmaster (Gal. iii:23–25). Being then dead to the law by the body of Christ we are married to another. And this other One is He who died for us and who is risen from the dead. Justified believers are in a living union with a risen Christ; He lives in us and we live in Him. And the result of this most blessed union is fruit unto God. The law could

not produce any fruit whatever but only death; nor can the legal principle bring forth fruit unto God in a believer. Ephraim was joined to idols as we read in Hosea. But Ephraim observed the Lord, heard Him and became like a green fir tree. And the Lord adds, "From Me is thy fruit found" (Hosea xiv:9). The parable of the vine and the branches (John xv) illustrates in a simple and blessed way the apostolic statement, "Married unto another—that we should bring forth fruit unto God." As the branch is in closest union with the vine and the sap of the vine produces the fruit, so are we one with Christ, and abiding in Him we bring forth the fruit unto holiness, the fruit which pleases God.

And "when we were in the flesh" (our former state) the passions of sins were by the law. The law by its holy character brings out what the natural man is and stirs up the passions of sins. But it is different now. We are delivered from the law and we can serve in newness of Spirit. We have a new nature, even eternal life, and in that we can render a true spiritual service.

Verses 7–13.—"Is the law sin?" is the next question raised. It springs logically from the statement that the passions of sins, coming out of an evil, sinful heart, were by the law and bringing forth fruit unto death. Still another "God forbid" is the answer. The law was given that we might have through that law the knowledge of sin. "I had not known sin, but by the law." I would not be conscious of lust, unless the law said, "Thou shalt not covet." The law given by a holy God is God's detective. The law forbids and the commandment at once brings out what is in the heart of man. Therefore, no blame can be put upon the law. Sin is that which must be blamed. Sin is lawlessness, rebellion against God and the law brings out that rebellion. Therefore apart from the law sin was dead, that is, dormant. But as soon as the commandment is given the evil heart rebels against it and man is detected to be a sinner and a transgressor. Let us notice the change of the pronoun "we" to "I." Some thirty times this little word

"I" is found in verses 7–25. We are brought upon the ground of personal experience; it has to be discovered and learned experimentally. The Apostle personifies this experience and speaks thus personally describing how a believer learns the lessons about the law, how the law cannot help a justified believer, and but makes of him a wretched man. It must also have been his own experience.

"For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." This is the experience of a man who is ignorant of the spirituality of the law. He thinks himself alive, but when the commandment came, its spiritual demands realized (the law is spiritual, verse 14), the false notion of being alive was detected for sin revived and he died, which means that sin discovered by the law, condemned him to death. "And the commandment which was unto life was found for me to be unto death." In connection with the commandment, the law, it is written, "This do, and thou shalt live." And so in this experience—he tries next to get life by the law, but he found it was unto death, for the declaration of the law is "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. iii:10; Deut. xxvii:26). He speaks of sin, his evil nature, as one who had deceived him into all this, so that the law could manifest its power in slaying him. Verse 12 is the real answer to the question, "Is the law sin?" The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good. And because the law is holy it gives knowledge of sin and detects sin, bringing it to light in all its hideousness and then pronounces the sentence of death. One other question is asked, "Was then that which is good (the law) made death unto me?" God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful." It all comes back upon sin (the evil nature,the flesh). Thus by the commandment sin becomes exceeding sinful.

Verses 14–24.—But all this must be learned by experience especially the fact "I am carnal," the knowledge that in

my flesh there dwelleth no good thing and that I have no power, I am powerless against indwelling sin. What person is it who describes his experience in these words? Some have applied it exclusively to the Apostle. Others state that it pictures an awakened sinner and not a converted man. The man described is born again, but is in bondage to the law and is ignorant of his deliverance in Christ. We find first the statement "we know that the law is spiritual." This is the knowledge which a true Christian possesses concerning the law. And the Christian who knows this great truth, that the law is spiritual, also has learned another truth. "I am carnal and sold under sin." Here then it is where experience begins. True Christian experience is to know our full deliverance in Christ and to walk in the Spirit; the experience of a Christian in struggling with the old nature and discovering what is that old nature, the flesh, is put before us in verses 15–24. That we have here a converted person is seen by the fact first of all, that he does not want to do evil, he wants to do good and cannot do it and therefore hates what he does. The carnal nature, the flesh, which is still in a converted person, is thus demonstrated as enslaving him, however, he is no longer a willing slave, but he hates that old thing which has the mastery over him. In hating it and condemning sin, he does the same what the law does, for it also condemns sin. In this way he consents to the law that it is good. The seventeenth verse is of much importance. "Now then it is no more I that really do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." He learns the difference between himself as born again, in possession of a new nature, and the old nature. He begins to distinguish himself as in possession of a new nature that wills to do good, hating evil, and sin in him, the flesh in which dwells nothing good, but all that is evil. "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." It is a great discovery to find out by experience, that although the believer is born again, he has a nature in him which is evil, which

cannot bring forth a good thing. But the will is present with him to do good, because he is born again; however, he finds not the power in himself to perform what is good. And now the conflict between the two natures is on. It brings out some important facts. "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me." He as born again, no longer loves sin; he hates it. Because he does that, which he does not want to do he can truthfully say "it is no more I that do it." Furthermore he delights in the law of God after the inward man. This can never be said of an unconverted man, but only he who has a new nature can delight in the law of God. But he finds himself in helpless captivity to the law of sin which is at work in his members. He finds out that while he has a new nature to will good and to hate evil, he has no power; sin is too strong for him. And this is to teach the believer that he must get power to overcome outside of himself. All his resolutions and good wishes cannot supply the strength to do. That he is self-occupied, seeking power by what he does and tries to do, is seen from the use of the little word "I." The name of the One in whom we have deliverance, Christ, is not mentioned once. The case is clear, it is the description of the experience of a believer, who is justified, born again, in union with Christ, dead with Him, risen with Him and indwelt by the Holy Spirit; but he lacks the knowledge of this and tries by his own efforts and in his own strength, through keeping the law, to obtain holiness. Having discovered that nothing good dwells in his flesh; that the flesh is not himself, but sin in him and that, because it is too strong for him, he is powerless, the cry of despair is uttered by him. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He has reached the end of self. He looks now for deliverance from another source, outside of himself. The answer comes at once. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." In Him there is deliverance and what that deliverance is, we shall learn from the first four verses of the eighth chapter. The two laws are mentioned once more in the last verse of this chapter. With the mind, as born again, he serves the

law and the law gives him no power; in the struggle with the old nature he is enslaved by the law of sin.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. In Christ; no Condemnation but Deliverance. 1–4.
2. Flesh and Spirit. 5–8.
3. The Body and the Spirit. 9–11.
4. Sons and Heirs of God. 12–17.
5. The Time of Travail and Groaning; the Future Redemption. 18–25.
6. The Intercession of the Spirit. 26–27.
7. The Saints Calling; the Challenge and the Assurance. 28–39.

Verses 1–4.—We have reached the mountain-top of this great Epistle. What man is in the flesh and under the law has been fully demonstrated. "The flesh profiteth nothing" (John vi:63). The law cannot give power to deliver, but only produces wretchedness, and, as we saw, deliverance must come from another. "Power belongeth unto God" (Ps. lxii:11); the power of deliverance must come from God. And this was the triumphant note in the previous chapter. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And now we see the believer in Christ Jesus, free from all condemnation, free from the law of sin and death, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, a child of God, an heir of God and joint heir with the Lord Jesus Christ." It is the contrasted statement of the privileges, the capacities, the security, and the prospects of the Christians as having the Spirit, that is here presented as the divinely wrought counterpart of the preceding description of man "as carnal, sold under sin." The proof and witness of human wretchedness is the Law. The title and measure of Christian blessedness is Christ. As alive in Christ the believer is estimated, not according to the variable standard of his own emotions, but according to the eternal fixedness of Divine truth now realized and established in the person of Christ before God."*

The first statement assures the believer in Christ that there is for him no more condemnation. In Christ Jesus, in

*Pridham on Romans.

identification with Him who died for our sins and is risen from the dead, in whom we have died and have life, in such a position condemnation is no longer possible, because nothing is left to be condemned. There can be no condemnation for those who are united to a risen Christ; as He is so are we. And this most blessed assurance is unconditional. The words "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" as they appear in the Authorized version must be omitted here; they have been proven to be an interpolation. We find them at the close of the fourth verse, which is the proper place for them. But what makes the believer in Christ Jesus free from the law of sin and death, which is in his members? The second verse answers this question. "For the law of the Spirit, of life in Christ Jesus, hath set me free from the law of sin and death." The law of sin and death has lost its power by another law; the law of the Spirit is, that of life in Christ Jesus. It means that the Spirit's law is that we are as believers for everything, for all things dependent on Christ. In Him are all our springs and resources. He is our life and His life is in us. We are one with Him. To appropriate this in faith, identifying ourselves with Christ as God has done it, giving Him the pre-eminence, glorifying Him—this gives power and deliverance. And the Spirit, the Spirit of holiness and power is also given to the believer; He dwells in Him. If the believer then walks according to the law of the Spirit, that is in Christ, we are made free from the law of sin and death. The righteousness of the law can in this way be fulfilled in us. But there is a condition. We must walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. What is the walk according to the Spirit? It is not self-occupation, nor even occupation with the Holy Spirit. Walking according to the Spirit is occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ. If the believer ever looks to Christ, depends on Him, draws all he needs from Him, if Christ is His all—then the believer walks according to the Spirit. Then there is power over the old nature and the righteousness, demanded by the law is being fulfilled. And we must not overlook the fact that

God's love is mentioned in this blessed unfolding of our deliverance in Christ. The law was weak, it could not get its righteous requirements fulfilled, on account of the flesh, the fallen nature of man. Then God came in. "God sending His own Son in likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh." It points us once more to the cross.

"He has sent His own Son in 'the likeness of sinful flesh' as the cross manifests Him, but there for sin, our sin, putting it completely away, while, at the same time condemning it utterly. Sin in the flesh is condemned,—I myself, with all that is in me, my own thoughts, my will, my wisdom, my ways,—in the cross, I see the end of it all, but the end of it in the love which has come in fully for me and which now fulfills in me the righteous requirement of the law when it is no longer simply requirement, but the Spirit of God has filled my heart with the joy of Christ. 'The joy of the Lord is your strength." I am free to give myself up to drink in this love which God has shown me and which rests upon me in Christ, in all the fulness of God's delight in Him. I have no cause now to ask: Must not God condemn the evil in me? He *has* condemned it, and I read the condemnation there where I find also Himself for me in a grace which knows no conditions, and which holds me fast, therefore, forever."*

Notice that the opening verses of the eighth chapter refer us back to the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters. The believer is in Christ the last Adam and therefore beyond condemnation. (Chapter v:12–21). Sin is not to have dominion over us (Chapter vi). Sin in the flesh has been condemned and the righteousness of the law is fulfilled by a walk according to the Spirit (Chapter vii).

Verses 5–8.—Next we find a contrast between the flesh and the Spirit. While the believer is no longer in the eyes of God in the flesh, the flesh, however, is still in him as long as he has this mortal body. There is therefore a conflict

*Numerical Bible.

between the Spirit and the flesh. Humanity falls into two classes, those who are according to the flesh, the unsaved; and those who are according to the Spirit, believers in Christ. A believer is called to walk according to the Spirit, in the sphere into which he is brought through grace. He may walk according to the flesh, but that does not put him back into his former state, when unsaved, he was in the flesh. The mind of the flesh, the condition in which man is by nature, is described in a fourfold way: 1. It is death. 2. It is enmity against God. 3. The flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 4. They that are in the flesh cannot please God. Such is the state of all who are not born again. But the believer is no longer in the flesh, but is in Christ and the mind of the Spirit is life and peace, which the believer possesses. The believer who walks carnally cannot please God, just as a man who is not born of the Spirit, cannot please God. The carnal walk of the believer results in a broken fellowship with God. But Christ is our Advocate with the Father and He restores while the indwelling Spirit leads to confession and self-judgment. The standing of a believer before God is always in Christ; God beholds us in Him and no longer in the flesh, the sphere of sin and death. The practical state of a believer is often varying. But our failures and shortcomings can never affect our standing before God in Christ. This is an important truth. Many true believers are in a miserable bondage, in doubts and fears, lacking assurance and the joy of salvation, because they do not know the fixed and unalterable standing a believer hath in Christ.

Verses 9–11.—The believer's standing is, therefore, emphasized. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so that the Spirit of God dwell in you; but if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." The believer is no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit because the Spirit of God dwells in him. For the first time we have the blessed truth declared that the Spirit of God is in the believer. As the Spirit of God, He marks the new standing before God;

as the Spirit of Christ, He is evidencing the fact that the believer belongs to Christ, and that He produces in him Christ-likeness. Sometimes true believers ask the question, "How can I get the Holy Spirit?" Certain teachers say that a believer, after being saved, should seek the gift and sealing of the Spirit. To teach this is altogether unscriptural. The gift and sealing of the Spirit are at once bestowed upon all who are in Christ, and every true believer is in Christ. "In whom ye also trusted, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also believing, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i:13). "He that hath sealed us with the Holy Spirit is God" (2 Cor. i:22). The sealing with the Spirit does not put a believer in Christ; but because we have trusted on Him we are sealed. This verse here in Romans is conclusive. The Spirit given to us marks off the believer as belonging to Christ. Acts xix:2 is frequently quoted to back up the erroneous teaching that the Spirit must be received in a definite experience after conversion. One little word is responsible for the error. The word "since" is mistranslated; it is "when." "Have ye received the Spirit when ye believed?"

Occupation with the Spirit of God and His indwelling is nowhere demanded of the believer. He has come not to testify of Himself, but to glorify Christ. Therefore He testifies of the blessed fact that "Christ is in you." The Spirit is life on account of righteousness. It means that the spirit of the believer is energized by the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is the power of life in the believer. What about the body of the believer? It is dead on account of sin. The body has not yet the effects of redemption in it; it is not yet quickened. But the mortal body of the believer has the promise of redemption. The Holy Spirit dwells in that body and He is the earnest of our inheritance. "If the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies on account of His Spirit who dwelleth in you." This is the redemption for which we wait (see

verse 23). It will come when the Lord comes for His Saints. The believer is nowhere taught to look for the death of the mortal body he has, but for the Coming of the Lord, who "shall change our body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii:21). "Behold, I show you a mystery; we *shall* not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. xv:51–52; 1 Thess. iv:17). Here we have a blessed answer to the question asked in the previous chapter. "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The answer is "the Lord Jesus Christ." And while the believer waits for that promised, coming deliverance, deliverance from the presence of sin, He walks in the Spirit, freed from the power of sin.

Verses 12–17.—Believers are therefore no longer debtors to the flesh, to live after the flesh. We owe the flesh nothing, for it has never done anything for us. If a person lives according to the flesh, if this is the sphere in which he moves, he is "about to die," on the road to death. But if by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." "Death and life are here set in prospect before the soul as the results, respectively, of the path now chosen. As to the believer, he is characteristically one who is not in the flesh. This he is, not as the result of attainment, but by the grace of God. The appeal which the Apostle here makes is to the Christian conscience. Where there is life, there will be an answer to that appeal. The mortification of the deeds of the body is the result of the Spirit's energy, the energy of that Spirit, who produces in him the fruits of life, when unhindered in the gracious operations of His love. Mortification of the deeds of the body is looked for only from believers who are indwelt by the Spirit. There is, therefore, nothing in verse 13 that need chill in the least the confidence of the poor weak-spirited self-judging Christian. Those who are most given to self-judgment are they to whom the warning here expressed has the least application." The mortification of the deeds of the body does

not mean asceticism. It is that which is more fully mentioned in Col. iii:5–7.*

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. This proves the believer to be in this blessed relationship. The life and walk in the Spirit is the outward evidence of sonship. And the Spirit we have received is not the Spirit of bondage, to fear and to doubt, but it is the gracious Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Abba is the Aramaic (the language spoken by Jews in Palestine). Father is the word the Gentile uses. Both Jews and Gentiles believing receive the Spirit of Sonship. They both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Eph. ii:18). "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv:6). The marks and evidences of the sonship of the believer are more fully given in the first Epistle of John (i:5–7, ii:1–3, 9, 10, 27, 28, iii:1–6, 14, 19, 24, iv: 1–4, 7, 8, 15, 20, 21, v:1–4, 10–12, 13).

Furthermore, the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. This witness is not a mere good feeling, which is subject to fluctuations, but the witness of the Spirit is in the Word of God. We know that we are the children of God, because the Word assures us that it is so; this is the witness of the Spirit. And our own spirit bears the same witness, for we know that we have passed from death unto life. "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us His Spirit" (1 John iv:13). We have the blessed consciousness of our relationship as children in our own spirit, the highest intelligence we possess in ourselves. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God. . . . Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not appear what we

*If men live according to the flesh, they are on the way to death. It does not say that they will die. God's grace is always free to come in, but then if it comes in it takes one off the road to death; it does not speak in such a manner as if sin were of no consequence.—Numerical Bible.

shall be, but we know, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii:1–2). We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. And we suffer with Him—for the world knoweth us not as it knew Him not—and shall be glorified with Him, in the coming day of His glorious manifestation. Our fellowship with Him as God's children is now in suffering, and afterward in glory.

Verses 18–25.—The highest summit of the Epistle has been reached. In Christ; no condemnation; free from the law of sin and death; indwelt by the Spirit of God; led by the Spirit of God; children of God; heirs of God; joint heirs with Christ—this is the blessed and sublime culmination. And as it is when we stand on some mountain-peak, a great vision now bursts upon us. It concerns the future. A wonderful glory is in store for the children of God. The sons of God are going to be manifested (verse 19). That will be when Christ, the head of the new creation is manifested; then we shall also be manifested with Him in glory (Col. iii:4). Then He will occupy the throne of His glory and "we shall reign with Him over the earth." All creation groaneth and travaileth until now, anxiously looking forward to that coming day when the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For creation was put into the place of corruption and death through the fall of man. But it was subjected to this not without hope. The hope of a ruined creation is the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both the Creator of all things and the Redeemer. Upon His blessed brow He bore the thorns, the emblem of the curse which rests upon creation. And when He comes groaning creation will be delivered. Then "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and fatling together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox" (Isa. xi:6–9). It is the glorious vision of the coming age, the dispensation of the fulness of times, when all things will be gathered together in Christ. The Prophets and the Psalms

tell out more fully the story of a restored creation, blest through Him who paid for it by His own precious blood. And we, who have the first fruits of the Spirit also groan within ourselves, awaiting that blessed consummation, when we shall come into our full inheritance, the redemption of our body. Our salvation is in hope of this future redemption and glorification. We wait patiently for it.

Verses 26–27.—Prayer is now mentioned. We need it in the midst of the groans, the sorrows and sufferings with which we are surrounded and which is our lot as long as we are in this mortal body. And prayer is our refuge, the expression of our dependence upon God and our utmost confidence in Him. But while we know how to pray, we often do not know "what we should pray for as we ought." Then the Spirit Himself maketh intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered. "Prayer is most commonly the witness of our infirmities. The burdened heart may find itself too full for speech, too much perplexed, for the ordering of its thoughts. But there is an utterance of supplication that makes no sound. It is the Spirit, as the helper of our infirmities, who makes these desires known to the God. Groaning in sympathy with the tried and longing heart, He makes His intercession for the Saints according to the will of God." Thus the mind of the Spirit in us is known of God—and heard by Him. And then we must remember that besides this intercession of the Spirit there is the intercession of Christ at the right hand of God (Verse 34). The believer is therefore hedged about and made secure and if he walks in the Spirit, constant peace and joy will be His daily portion.

Verses 28–39.—Therefore we know that to those who love God all things work together for good, to those who are called according to purpose. We can rest in God and commit all to Him. The purpose of God for His own, from eternity to eternity is blessedly revealed. "From God's foreknowledge of us in the past eternity to the accomplished glory of the future, there is a perfectly linked chain of blessing, no link of which can ever be sundered. God's purpose is that Christ His Son, should be a First-born among many

brethren."* And the chain of blessing is—foreknown—predestinated—called—justified and glorified. We do not enter into the controversies of the past concerning predestination, but repudiate that unscriptural conception that God has predestinated a part of the human race to be lost. This is incorrect in view of the statement of Scripture that God "will have all men to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii:4). But all are not saved because they believe not. God knows† all who would believe and these are predestinated, called, justified and will be ultimately glorified. And His eternal purpose will not fail and all who are in Christ will be conformed to the image of His Son. This is the Hope of God's calling (Ephes. i:18).

And what a blessed, most precious and glorious ending of this great chapter and the entire doctrinal section of this great Epistle! What shall we say then to these things? Our answer must be worship and adoration of the God who hath loved us so in giving His only begotten Son, who reached down to our misery and shame and who hath lifted us so high. The great truths of the Gospel are once more reviewed. God is for us, who can be against us. The proof of it is that He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. With Him He has given us freely all things. God is the justifier therefore "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Christ died, Christ is risen, Christ is at the right hand of God making intercession for us—who then is he that shall condemn? And nothing can separate us from the love of Christ and the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. No condemnation and no separation! No more wrath but eternal glory! Such is the salvation of God.

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*Numerical Bible.

†For knowledge expresses the original operation of the Divine mind, considered with reference to the pure and unapproachable majesty of the blessed and only Potentate. Predestination respects rather the condition of that which is thus foreknown, objectively regarded as a vessel of His will."—Pridham.

II. DISPENSATIONAL. GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL.

Chapters ix–xi.

1. Israel and God's Sovereignty.

CHAPTER IX.

1. Paul's Yearning over Israel. 1–3.
2. What Israel Possesseth. 4–5.
3. God's Unconditional Election. 6–13.
4. God's Sovereignty. The Vindication of His Justice and Mercy. 14–26.
5. Mercy for the Remnant. 27–29.
6. Israel's Rejection of God's Righteousness. 30–33.

This second division brings before us Israel and shows that the principles of the Gospel, as unfolded in the first eight chapters are in harmony with God's ways with Israel. Jews and Gentiles, those who have the law and those who had no law, were proven guilty before God. All have sinned and are equally lost. Both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin. The same God justifies the circumcision by faith, and also the uncircumcision. Jews were thus brought upon the same level with the Gentiles. There is no difference. Grace goes forth alike to Jews and Gentiles who believe. But this fact raises a most important question. How can all this be reconciled with the promises made in a special manner to the Jews? How can the principles be harmonized with God's faithfulness? Has God gone back on His Word and covenants? Hath God cast away His people? The answer to these questions and the demonstration that God is just and faithful in all His dealings with Jews and Gentiles is given in these three chapters.*

*Godet states that the problem "how can God set aside those He elected," is answered in three ways: 1. God preserves His entire liberty (ix). 2. He shows that Israel's sin is the true explanation. (x) 3. God vindicates His action by foretelling future consequences (xi).

Verses 1–3.—Paul speaks of himself in each of these three chapters. Knowing that they rejected the salvation of God, he yearns and sorrows over his kinsmen. In the next chapter he expresses his heart's desire and prayer for their salvation and in the eleventh chapter he mentions himself as an evidence that God has not cast away His people. The Jews, because He preached salvation to the Gentiles, looked upon him as an enemy of their nation and as a traitor. "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always, for the wrath is come upon them to the uppermost." Thus he wrote to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. ii:10). In Jerusalem the Jewish mob cried, "Away with such a fellow from the earth." They hated him, but he loved his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh. It was this mighty love which burned in his soul, which constrained him to go up to Jerusalem, in spite of the warnings given by the Holy Spirit. So intense was his yearnings for them that he had wished to be cut off from Christ for them, if that were possible. He was like Moses, when he prayed, "If Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book, which thou hast written" (Exod. xxxii:32).

Verses 4–5.—And what is this people in the purpose of God? What are their possessions and privileges? It is the most favored nation on the earth. "What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?" (Deut. iv:7). The *adoption* is theirs, as His family on earth, destined for earthly blessings (Amos iii:2). And God had said, "I am a Father to Israel" and "Israel is my son, my Firstborn." They had the *Glory.* In visible glory Jehovah dwelt in their midst. While absent now, the promise is, that in the future day of their restoration, that glory will return with the coming of the Lord (Isa. iv; Ezek. xliii:4). Theirs are also the *covenants*; they were made with the nation; and the giving of the *law.* Furthermore, theirs is the *service* of God, that divinely instituted levitical ritual, so full of blessed and prophetic meaning. All other rituals

are unauthorized counterfeits. They also have the *promises*. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, concerning the flesh, Christ came, He, who is God over all blessed forever. Amen."* And all these great things belong to Israel. They still belong to them. When the time of their national conversion and restoration comes all these things will be manifested in their fulness, even to a restored, glorious service in the millennial temple (Ezek. xl–xlvii). And these statements show that the Apostle to the Gentiles did not despise the nation Israel and its privileges.

Verses 6–13. Now if the nation as such had failed, as we find later, on account of unbelief, and they were rejected for the present, the Word of God had not failed on that account. If God had called the Gentiles and they received now the blessing of righteousness, it does not mean that the Word of God has come to naught. God's purpose concerning Israel cannot fail. But they prided themselves that they were of the seed of Abraham and therefore exclusively entitled to the promises. "We have Abraham to our father" (Luke iii:8), was their boast, and the Lord had told them "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (John viii:39). They forgot in their blind antagonism to the Gospel that the Scriptures showed that blessing had its source with the choice of God, that blessing is the result of elective mercy and the title to it must be of faith. Divine election is the only ground of blessing. They are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children. If such were the case then the children of the flesh, Ishmael and his offspring, were on the same ground with them. There was a promise made "At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son." In that promised son, in Isaac alone, the seed was called, therefore the children of the promise are counted for the seed. This showed that they

*More than once the attempt has been made to change those wonderful words, bearing testimony to the Deity of our Lord. The revised version, in its marginal reading, is one of the latest attempts to rob our Lord of this great and true tribute.

had no right to expect Divine blessing simply on the ground of natural descent. And in the choice of Isaac, God's sovereignty and election is seen. They might therefore be Abraham's seed and yet not be Abraham's children; only those that are of faith are the children of Abraham (Gal. iii:7). The case of Jacob and Esau is next cited. Rebecca was their mother. Before the children were even born, and therefore had done neither good nor evil, to merit anything, it was said unto her, "the elder shall serve the younger." It was so ordered "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth." If they claim and expect blessing merely on the ground of natural descent, then the descendants of Esau, the Edomites, must be admitted to the same blessings with them.* This they would not admit. Inasmuch as all rests upon God's unconditional election, their objections to the blessing of the Gentiles through the Gospel, God dealing with them in grace, were disproven by their own history.

Verses 14–26.—God can choose whom He will. This is His sovereignty. Is then God unrighteous in doing this? God forbid. Two examples of God's sovereignty in mercy and in judgment are given. Had God dealt with Israel according to His righteousness, they would have been cut off. Then the sovereignty of God was displayed and Israel was spared. All rests upon that sovereign mercy—"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." And Pharaoh illustrates God's sovereignty in judgment. Pharaoh was a wicked, God-hating man. God had shown him mercy, but he hardened his heart and defied the Lord. In arrogant pride he said, "Who is Jehovah that I should obey Him. I know not Jehovah." Then He hardened his heart and made him a monument of His wrath. "Both were wicked—Israel and Pharaoh. Righteousness would have condemned both.

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*"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." The love for Jacob was unmerited. "Esau have I hated" stands written at the close of the Old Testament, after the continued wickedness of Edom had been fully demonstrated and merited God's indignation.

He has mercy on one, and hardens the other. He has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens, when simple righteousness would have condemned both. This is sovereignty. He proves Himself not merely righteous (the day of judgment will prove that), but proves Himself God." But man, the creature of the dust, replies to God and brings his finite thoughts to judge God. The questions in Verse 19 are severely rebuked. What is man that he should speak to his Creator! The thing formed speaks to Him that formed it. "Why hast Thou made us thus?" The potter can take a lump of clay and form out of it two vessels, one unto honor and another unto dishonor. It is his right. God can do this according to His sovereign will, and none can say, What doest Thou? However, while this is God's right, that He can do so, if He chooses to do it, there is nothing said, that He has done so. "God's sovereignty is the first of all rights, the foundation of all rights, the foundation of all morality. If God is not God, what will He be? The root of the question is this; is God to judge man, or man God? God can do whatsoever He pleases. He is not the object for judgment. Such is His title: but when in fact the apostle presents the two cases, wrath and grace, He puts the case of God showing *long suffering* towards one already fitted for wrath, in order to give at last an example to men of His wrath in the execution of His justice; and then of God displaying His glory in vessels of mercy whom *He* has prepared for glory. There are then these three points established with marvellous exactitude; the power to do all things, no one having the right to say a word; wonderful endurance with the wicked, in whom at length His wrath is manifested; demonstration of His glory in vessels, whom He has Himself prepared by mercy for glory, and whom He has called, whether from among the Jews or Gentiles, according to the declaration of Hosea."* The objections which were raised against God's dealings in grace with Gentiles are completely met and an-

*Synopsis by J. N. D.

swered. He calls whom He will and calling the Gentiles and showing them mercy has not cancelled the promises made to Israel.

Verses 27–29.—Now while Grace goes forth to the Gentiles, mercy is also in store for Israel. Ultimately a remnant will be saved—not the whole nation, but a remnant. It refers us to a specific time, "When He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness, because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Isa. x:22–23). It is a prediction concerning the future. They will, when this age closes, pass through a time of judgment; in that period God in sovereign power and mercy will call a remnant of His people, the remnant so often seen in the prophetic Word and in the Book of Revelation. That remnant will be saved and will become the nucleus of the coming Kingdom; the unbelieving apostate Israel will be swept away in judgment.

Verses 30–33.—The conclusion of this intensely interesting and often misunderstood chapter puts before us the fact of God's merciful dealings with Gentiles and Israel's failure. The Gentiles, who did not follow after righteousness, have attained to the righteousness, which is of faith. They believe the Gospel and enjoy the blessings of the Gospel. Israel failed. Why? They sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, the way of failure and death. They rejected the principle of faith, even declared in their own Scriptures, "the just shall live by faith." They stumbled at the stumbling stone (1 Peter ii:8).

2. Israel's Failure and Unbelief.

CHAPTER X.

1. Israel's Condition. 1–4.
2. Righteousness by Works and by Faith. 5–13.
3. The Gospel Published Abroad. 14–17.
4. Israel's Unbelief. 18–21.

Verses 1–4.—For His beloved people Israel the great apostle of the Gentiles prayed to God, that they might be saved. What an example he has given to us believers of

the Gentiles. We owe a great debt to Israel; but how little prayer there is among Gentile Christians for the salvation of the Jews! Paul bears witness that they had zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. Their ignorance consisted in not knowing God's righteousness, that which is found in the first part of the Epistle, seeking therefore to establish their own righteousness, in doing this, they did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. They were religious, kept the law outwardly, and Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, they rejected. Alas! The same is still the condition of the Jews.

Verses 5–13.—Righteousness by works and by faith is contrasted. Moses, in whom they trusted as their great teacher, describes the righteousness which is of the law in these words, "the man who doeth those things shall live by them." But the righteousness by faith is likewise mentioned by Moses; but for the Holy Spirit calling attention to it in this passage, it would never have been known. Deut. xxx, where these words are found, speaks of the time, when Israel in a world-wide dispersion, will return with the heart to God and when He will have compassion upon them. Then their heart will be circumcised and grace will be manifested towards them. Driven out of the land for having broken the law, they will hearken to the Word and obey in faith.

"The Apostle therefore quotes such terms as exclude 'doing' on the part of man. Righteousness springs out of the finished work of Christ (verses 3, 4), and there can be no 'finished' work while man is endeavoring to be saved by law, for this would be virtually to undo what Christ has done. That which would be impossible to man, God has already done in Christ. All the 'doing' required by the law, has been accomplished by Jesus Christ, and everything that is required now from men is to believe what Christ has done. Christ has neither to be brought down from heaven, nor to be raised again from the dead; everything has been accomplished, and all that is left is to accept in trustful thankful-

ness. Faith has not to acquire or win a Saviour, but to accept One Who has already accomplished the work of redemption. God's righteousness is not distant and difficult, but near and easy."*

And this word, which is nigh, the Apostle saith "is the word of faith which we preach." And this it is "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shall believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" How blessedly simple all this is. Jesus must be owned as Lord; He, who died for our sins, and whom God raised from the dead. Blessed assurance, "thou shalt be saved!" Saved by grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

"Moreover, this faith is manifested by the proof it gives of its sincerity—by confession of the name of Christ. If some one were convinced that Jesus is the Christ, and refused to confess Him, his conviction would evidently be his greater condemnation. The faith of the heart produces the confession of the mouth; the confession of the mouth is the counterproof of the sincerity of the faith, and of honesty, in the sense of the claim which the Lord has upon us in grace. It is the testimony which God requires at the outset. It is to sound the trumpet on earth in face of the enemy. It is to say that Christ has conquered, and that everything belongs in right to Him. It is a confession which brings in God in answer to the name of Jesus. It is not that which brings in righteousness, but it is the public acknowledgment of Christ, and thus gives expression to the faith by which there is participation in the righteousness of God, so that it may be said, 'He believes in Christ unto salvation; he has the faith that justifies.' "

Then twice the word "whosoever" is mentioned, that precious Gospel word, which includes all, Jews and Gentiles, for there is no difference between the Jew and the

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*Prof. W. A. Griffith Thomas.

Gentile, for the same Lord over all is such unto all that call upon Him. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel ii:32; Acts ii:21). All proves that righteousness is by faith and is offered to all. The statement in Joel also refers to a future day in connection with the coming deliverance of the remnant and the coming of the Lord.

Verses 14–17.—And this good news for Jews and Gentiles must be proclaimed, for how can they call on Him, in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they have been sent? Of such a gracious world-wide mission the law had nothing to say. Its message and the promises were confined to the nation Israel. The Lord Jesus as the minister of the circumcision sent His messengers only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. x); but after His death and resurrection He gave the commission "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached unto all nations, beginning in Jerusalem" (Luke xxiv:47). And the Lord sends forth His messengers; even so it was written before in Isa. lii:7.* All is of Him, the righteousness, the salvation as well as the proclamation. But not all obeyed the gospel, nor do all obey the gospel call now. This also was foretold by Isaiah, in the great chapter (liii) in which Israel's rejection of the Messiah is foretold, as well as the future confession of that rejection. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Verses 18–21.—Israel is unbelieving. They heard and believed not. The law and the prophets had borne witness to the fact that the Gentiles would believe (Deut. xxxii:21; Isa. lxx:1). And in infinite patience and long-suffering the Lord had stretched forth His hands unto Israel as a disobedient and gainsaying people. They were unbe-

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*A careful study of this passage and the context shows its future meaning likewise, at the time, when the Lord reigneth, "when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

lieving and set aside. Their future restoration is the theme of the next chapter.

Israel's Restoration.*

CHAPTER XI.

1. God Hath not Cast Away His People. 1.
2. Israel's Apostasy not Complete; a Remnant Saved. 2–6.
3. Israel's Blindness for a Season. 7–10.
4. To Provoke Them to Jealousy. 11.
5. Their Fulness and Reception Life from the Dead. 12–15.
6. The Parable of the Two Olive Trees. 16–24.
7. A Mystery Made Known. All Israel Saved. 25–32.
8. The Doxology. 33–36.

Verse 1.—In view of the preceding chapter on Israel's rejection, the question is asked "Hath God cast away His People?" Is there nothing more in store for national Israel? God forbid. If it were so God's gifts and calling would be subject to repentance and He would not be the faithful, covenant-keeping God. He foreknew His people Israel and that foreknowledge embraced all their sad history of failure and apostasy. The Apostle Paul speaks of himself as an Israelite of the seed of Abraham. He demonstrates in his own experience the fact that God hath not cast away His people. Hating Christ, having zeal for God without knowledge, a persecutor of the church, he had obtained mercy that in him Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him (1 Tim. i:16). His unique conversion must be looked upon as a prophetic type of the conversion of the remnant of Israel, when the Lord comes. As Saul of Tarsus saw Him in the glory-light, so the Israel living in the day of the second Coming of Christ will behold Him (Zech. xii:10; Rev. i:7). This vision will result in their national conversion.

Verses 2–6.—The time of Elias was one of the darkest periods of their history. It seemed as if the whole nation had apostatized from God. Elias had this conception when

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*"The Jewish Question," by A. C. G., gives a complete exposition of this great chapter. Price 75 cents postpaid.

he complained in his despondency. "They have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." The Lord told him then that there were seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. The apostasy of Israel was not a complete apostasy. The Lord had preserved a faithful remnant. Even so at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. In the beginning of this present age there was in existence a distinctive Jewish remnant. This Jewish-Christian remnant in the beginning of the dispensation was an evidence that God had not cast away His people. A similar remnant of believing Jews will be called for a definite work and testimony during the end of the age. And throughout this Christian dispensation it has been abundantly demonstrated that God has not cast away His ancient people, for thousands of them have been saved by grace and have become members of the body of Christ

Verses 7–10.—When the apostle speaks here of the election he has in view the believing part of the nation at all times, the remnant past, the future remnant and all those who believe in Christ now. When he speaks of the rest being blinded he means the unbelieving part of the nation. Judicial blindness has come upon them for their unbelief. Three quotations are given from the Old Testament showing that the Lord foreknew their unbelief and predicted the judgment which was to come upon the nation (Deut. xxix:4; Isa. xxix:10 and Psalm lxix:22–24). A careful study of these chapters will show that the threatened judgments and the judicial blindness are not permanent. All the Prophets and many of the prophetic Psalms reveal the fact that the judgments which have come upon the people are for a season only and that there is glory and blessing in store for them. The curses pronounced upon them have found their literal fulfilment; the unfulfilled promises of blessing and glory will also be literally fulfilled and Israel will be saved and restored to their land.

Verse 11.—The setting aside of Israel is not final; their

present blindness is not their permanent condition. But have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid. They stumbled over Him in whom they saw no beauty and whom they did not desire. They received Him not, who had come to His own. But this did not result in their complete fall. God in His infinite wisdom and all-wise purpose brought by their fall salvation to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy. In this statement we see again that God has not cast away His people Israel. If He had cast them away, why should He wish to provoke them to jealousy? And this provoking to jealousy is with the intent that some of them might be saved (verse 14).

Verses 12–15.—And now the Apostle of the Gentiles addresses us Gentiles. "I speak to you Gentiles." It is a message of much importance. The fall of Israel was the riches of the world, the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles (verse 13); the casting away was the reconciling of the world. Thus blessing, great blessing came to the Gentiles by Israel's unbelief and fall. But this is not all. All this is far from accomplishing the promise made to the father of the nation, when God said to Abraham "In thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blest." Israel's fall, the means in God's purpose to bring salvation to the Gentiles, is not the final thing, and the blessings the Gentiles received by their fall is not the fullest blessing which God has in store for the world. Much more is in store for the world in blessing through Israel's restoration. To Israel is promised in the Old Testament a time of fulness, a time when they shall be taken back. Their time of fulness comes when Christ returns in power and in glory. If then God brought blessing to the Gentiles by their fall, how far greater will be the blessings for the world, when their time of fulness has come. It will be life from the dead. Israel is now nationally and spiritually dead. They will be nationally and spiritually made alive (see Ezek. xxxvii:1–17, xxxix:25–29; Hosea v:15–vi:3). And the whole world comes in for blessing then. The nations will be converted and the kingdom will be set up on earth (see Zech. ii:10–13).

Verses 16–24.—The parable of the two olive trees illustrates great dispensational facts and contains solemn warnings for Christendom. The good olive tree typifies Israel in covenant relation with God in the Abrahamic covenant. The olive tree is evergreen; and so is the covenant, unchangeable. Israel's faithlessness and disobedience cannot annul it. The root is Abraham, who was holy, separated unto God. On account of unbelief some of the branches were broken off. They are now separated from the good olive tree and are withered. The wild olive tree is a picture of the Gentiles. The branches of this wild olive tree are grafted among the branches of the good olive tree to partake of the root and fatness of the good olive tree. The wild olive tree branches grafted upon the good olive tree do not represent the true church. The Gentiles are meant by it, who are, after Israel's unbelief, put upon the ground of responsibility which Israel had, to partake now of the promised covenant blessings. The grafted in branches represent the Christian profession, Christendom, as we call it. The grafted in branches are solemnly warned. They are not to boast, not to be high-minded; they must abide in goodness. If the warning is unheeded they will not be spared but cut off. And when that happens God will graft in again the natural branches into their own olive tree if they no longer abide in unbelief. God is able to do this. He can and will put back Israel into their former relation. It is prophetic. Christendom is exactly that which is here warned against—boasting, high-minded, not abiding in goodness, in one word, apostate. The unbelief and failure of professing Christendom is as great, if not greater than the unbelief and failure of Israel. The time will come when God will not spare, but execute judgment upon Christendom. He will spue Laodicea out of His mouth (Rev. iii:16). Then the hour of Israel's restoration has come.

Verses 25–32.—A mystery is made known. Blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. The fulness of the Gentiles means, the full number of the saved, gathered out from among the

Gentiles, who constitute the church, the body of Christ. And when the body is joined to the Head in glory, the time of the coming of the Lord for His Saints (1 Thess. iv:17), the Lord will turn again to Israel. All Israel, that is, the all Israel living in the day will be saved, when the Deliverer comes out of Zion (Isa. lix:20; Psalm xiv:7). It is the second, visible, personal and glorious coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob and take away their sins. Between the coming of the Lord for the Saints, who will meet Him in the air, and His coming in great power and glory, are the days of Jacob's trouble, when the nation will have to pass through the fires of tribulation and the wicked among Israel will be cut off. And after He has come and has taken away their sins, all the great prophecies of Israel's earthly glory will be fulfilled.

Verses 33–36.—A doxology closes this dispensational section of the epistle. What depths of riches, both of wisdom and knowledge of God, in His merciful dealings with the Gentiles and the Jews! How unsearchable His judgments! How untraceable His ways! For of Him, and through Him and to Him are all things to whom be glory forever. Amen.

III. EXHORTATIONS AND THE CONCLUSION.

Chapters xii–xvi.

CHAPTER XII.

1. The Body as a Willing Sacrifice. 1–2.
2. Service. 3–8.
3. The Daily Walk in Holiness. 9–21.

Verses 1–2.—Grace calls for obedience. After God has made known the riches of His grace, the fulness of the Gospel, His Spirit shows how believers should walk in a world of sin and tribulation. The first thing is to present the body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. This connects with the truth of chapter vi:19, "yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." "The body is the instrument of the spirit; and this so completely, that, if it be laid hold for Him, there is no part of the practical

life but must, of necessity, be His. The feet are used to walk at His bidding, the hands to employ ourselves in His things, the tongue to speak for Him and nothing else, the ear to hear His words; the eye also, so that whatever it looks upon, it will look upon as being under His control.* It is plain that the whole life thus finds its government." And this yielding of the body, giving it as a living sacrifice, is our intelligent service. It is the needful thing so that all which is written in the sixth chapter may become a practical thing in our lives. Is this presentation of the body as a living sacrifice an act done once for all (as some teach), or is it a daily yielding? It must be done continually. And it beomes possible to go on presenting the body thus, under all circumstances, if we remember the mercies of God, what God in Christ has done for us and in what a wonderful position He has put us in His own Son. But it needs constant watchfulness, prayer, meditation on the Word and self-judgment.

In doing this the believer will be able to carry out the exhortation, "be not conformed to this world (age)." A soul in touch with Christ, knowing the mercies of God in redemption, cannot enjoy the world. Well has it been said "true joy in the Lord renders the soul in which it dwells incapable of enjoying what the world esteems pleasure. Natural pleasures are the solace of that which is essentially alien of God." The present age is evil and Christ died to deliver us from this present evil age. Satan is the god of this age. It is not controlled by the Spirit of God. Therefore friendship with the world, conformity to it, is enmity to the cross of Christ. Separation from it is God's demand, for the cross of Christ has made us dead to the world and the world dead unto us. We must be transformed by the renewing of our mind. This is the work of the Spirit of God in us. The inward man is to be renewed day by day (2 Cor. iv:6); and this will be so as we daily present our bodies as the living sacrifice.

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*Numerical Bible.

Verses 3–8.—Service is mentioned next. This is to be rendered in humility and according to the measure of faith as God has dealt to every man, who is a believer. Here the body, that is, the church, is touched upon. In first Corinthians and Ephesians the truth concerning the church and the different gifts is more fully revealed. All believers are members of that body, and as in the human body not all members have the same office, so in the one body there are different gifts bestowed by grace. Each must take his place given to him in that body and render the service unto which he is called and thus demonstrate the divine truth, that we are one body in Christ, and individually members one of the other. Ministry in the Word stands first and there is also ministry in other ways. The latter are, giving, ruling (or leading) and showing mercy. Giving is to be in simplicity (or liberality); ruling is to be in diligence and showing mercy in cheerfulness. The emphasis here is not so much upon the different gifts as it is upon the faithful exercise of the gift.

Verses 19–21.—The daily walk in holiness is unfolded in these verses. These are precious exhortations and every Christian should read them often and order his daily life accordingly. Love stands first, for it is the great essential of the divine nature. He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him (1 John iv:16). It is to be unfeigned. Love seeketh not her own and therefore we are to prefer in honor one another. "Not slothful in business" is often misunderstood and many have thought it means devotion to a secular business. But the correct translation is, "In diligence, not slothful." Then there is rejoicing in hope, patience in suffering, prayer, sympathy with others and many other blessed things into which we cannot enter in detail. The child of God desires all these things and the Spirit of God is with us to produce these blessed fruits in our lives.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. Obedience to Authorities. 1–7.
2. Love the Fulfilling of the Law. 8–10.
3. The Day is at Hand. 11–14.

Verses 1–7.—The children of God are strangers and pilgrims in the world. Our citizenship is in heaven. But what is the Christian to do as living under different forms of government? The Christian is to be in subjection to these, for the powers that exist are ordained by Him. Resisting these powers would mean resistance to God who has ordained them. They are God's ministers to maintain order. "Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." If Christians had always obeyed these injunctions how well it would have been. But often they are forgotten and an attempt is made to control the politics of this age and to rule.

Verses 8–10.—"Owe no man anything, but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." The first sentence does not mean that it is wrong to borrow money. The question is about paying. If a debt is due it should be paid exactly on time. Borrowing money in a reckless way, without any prospect of returning the amount, is sinful and often great dishonor has been brought upon the name of our Lord on account of it. But there is another debt which always remains. The Christian owes the debt of love to all. And this love is the fulfilling of the law. Love does not work ill to his neighbor. The natural man may claim that he keeps the sum of the other commandments, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," but he cannot do it. Only one who is born again, in whose heart there is love, has the power to do this.

Verses 11–14.—The Coming of the Lord is brought before us in these verses as a motive to holy living. The final salvation is nearing, for the night is far spent and the day is at hand. The blessed hope is to be always before the Christian's heart; it is a purifying hope. "He that hath this hope set upon him purifieth himself as He is pure." In view

of that approaching day, when we shall see Him face to face and be with Him in glory, the exhortations are given to awake out of sleep, to cast off the works of darkness, to put on the armor of light, to walk becomingly as in the day, to abstain from the things of the flesh, putting on the Lord Jesus and making no provisions for the flesh. We are to walk in the light as the children of the day, with faces set towards the coming glory. And never before were those exhortations more needed than now. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. The signs of the end of the age are seen everywhere, and yet in these solemn days how few of God's people walk as the children of the day in the path of separation.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. Strong and Weak Brethren are the Lord's Servants. 1–12.
2. The True Way of Love. 13–23.

Verses 1–12.—The question concerning brethren who were weak in faith, how they are to be treated by those who are strong is now taken up. Those weak in the faith had not the complete knowledge of their position in Christ, though they knew Christ and loved Him. They did not realize that certain observances of days, or abstinences from meats and drinks, could not affect their salvation in any way. There were scruples and conscientious difficulties, as there are still among God's people. One believeth he may eat all things, he knew his full Christian freedom—another who is weak eateth herbs. How are these two to treat each other? Were they to criticize and condemn one the other? "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth, for God hath received him." The weak in faith are to be received, but not to doubtful points of reasonings; these questions are not to be brought up for discussion, or worse, to make them a test of Christian fellowship. Judging a brother, or condemning him on such matters is forbidden, for inasmuch as God hath received him, he is the Lord's servant and not ours. The rebuke is "Who art thou that thou judgest an-

other's servant? to his own Lord he standeth or falleth." More than that, the Lord in His gracious power shall keep him in all his weakness. He bears with him, "the Lord is able to make him stand." Each is responsible to the Lord. Each does it as unto the Lord. No one lives to himself, and no one dies to himself, we are all the Lord's. There is also a day coming when we all must stand before His judgment seat and then He will judge, who knows the secrets of every heart. Therefore we must not judge. Every one, as stated in all these cases, should be fully persuaded in his own mind and should not judge another, but to look forward to the judgment seat of Christ.

Verses 13–23.—But more than that there should be loving tolerance for the brother. Let the harsh judgment of the brother, whom God has received be abandoned; but judge this rather, "not to put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." There is nothing unclean in itself. Yet a brother may account something unclean, his conscience so judges, then it is unclean for him. The brother with the weak conscience must be considered. The law of love demands this. "If thy brother is grieved on account of thy food, thou walkest no longer in love; destroy not with thy food him for whom Christ died." Therefore "it is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything, whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended, or is made weak." "He that serves Christ in these things is acceptable and approved of men. We are to follow what makes for peace and edifies others. To the pure all things are pure; but if a person defiles his conscience, even though an unfounded scruple, to him it is unclean. Happy for him who, in boasting of his liberty by faith, does not go beyond his faith in what he does; and does not offend in what he allows himself to do; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. If a man thinks he ought to honor a certain day, or abstain from a certain food, and then, for the sake of showing his liberty, does not do it, to him it is sin. It is not faith before God."*

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*Synopsis.

CHAPTER XV.

1. The Example of Christ. 1–7.
2. The Ministry of Christ. 8–13.
3. Paul's Personal Ministry. 14–33.

Verses 1–7.—An additional motive is brought in why the strong should bear the infirmities of the weak and not please themselves. It is Christ. He did not please Himself, but bore in great meekness and patience the reproaches with which men reproached God, and these reproaches fell on Christ Himself. It was the reproach of God He bore in perfect meekness. We are therefore to be likeminded one to another according to Christ Jesus. Wherefore receive ye one another even as Christ also received you to the glory of God. We have then three instructions concerning the weak brother: 1. To receive the weak, but not to doubtful disputations. 2. Not to judge a brother in those things, because he is Christ's servant, and any one must give an account of himself. 3. To bear the infirmities of the weak, to put no stumbling block in their way, not to please ourselves. We are to walk in love and manifest that love by receiving one another as Christ has received us to the glory of God. And blessed are we if we also walk according to those rules and manifest the mind of Christ.

Verses 8–13.—The exhortations are ended, and what we find in the rest of this chapter is supplementary to the whole Epistle and touches once more on the question concerning the Jews and the Gentiles. Christ was the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises to the fathers. Thus He appeared in the midst of His people. But the Gentiles also were to receive mercy through Him. Four Scriptures are quoted to prove that it is the purpose of God to bless the Gentiles in mercy with His people Israel (Psalm xviii:49; Deut. xxxii:43 in Moses great prophetic song; Psalm cvii:1 and Isa. xi:10). But it must not be overlooked that these quotations do not teach that Gentiles are as fellow heirs put into the same body with believing Jews. They show that God had announced that Gentiles would rejoice in salvation and trust in Christ. The

fulfilment of the passages quoted awaits the second coming of our Lord "when He shall rise to reign over the Gentiles," when Gentiles will rejoice with the saved remnant of Israel. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, though the power of the Holy Spirit." This is our most blessed inheritance. The Holy Spirit indwells the child of God and in believing He manifests His power, the God of hope filling us with all joy and peace, so that we abound in hope, looking forward to that blessed day, the realization of our blessed Hope, when we shall be like Him and see Him as He is.

Verses 14–33.—Then the great man of God speaks lastly of His own ministry. Much might be written on this interesting paragraph. He had a special ministry conferred upon Himself. It was grace which had given it to him. His ministry he describes as being "the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.". A closer study of his statements, which tell of his humility, his marvellous service in power, his confidence, as well as other things, will be found helpful and instructive. He looked forward to his coming visit to Rome and requested the prayers of the brethren. And when he came there at last, he came as the prisoner of the Lord, and from Rome he sent forth the greatest of his Epistles.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. Greetings to Individuals. 1–16.
2. Warning and Comfort. 17–20.
3. The Final Salutations. 21–24.
4. The Conclusion. 25–27.

Verses 1–16.—Phoebe (which means "radiant") is first mentioned. She was probably a person of great influence and wealth, for she had been a succourer of many, including the Apostle. She is heartily commended to the assembly in Rome, to be received in the Lord, worthily of the Saints. Then that interesting pair of fellow workers of the Apostle Paul, Priscilla and Aquila, are saluted. To follow their wan-

derings and interest in the Gospel we have to omit here see Acts xviii:1–3, 18–19, 26; 1 Cor. xvi:19; 2 Tim. iv:19. At what time they laid down their necks for the life of the Apostle we do not know. The assembly met in their house.* Then the first convert of the province of Asia, the beloved Epaemetus is greeted. Many, who had labored much; Andronicus and Junius, who were in the Lord before Paul, and others are greeted. Little do we know of all these names, but their records are on high and at the judgment seat of Christ they and their abundant labors and sufferings will be made manifest.

Verses 17–20.—There is a warning against those who create divisions and give occasions to stumbling, contrary to the doctrine they had learned. These were probably teachers like those who disturbed the Galatians and these teachers were to be shunned—"turn away from them." To create divisions in the body of Christ is a work of the flesh and a serious matter. "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly, and by kind and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the guileless." How often this is the case with false teachers in our own times. Destructive critics, false teachers, deniers of the Gospel

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*Not till the third century have we any proofs of the existence of buildings set apart for Christian worship. Not only were most of the churches too poor to build meeting-places, but, until Christianity became the religion of the empire, the privacy and secrecy possible in a meeting held in a dwelling-house were important considerations. The wealthier members of a church seem to have put one of their rooms at the disposal of the brethren for this purpose. First comes the Upper Room, in which our Lord held his Last Supper with his disciples (Matt. xxvi:18), and then the house of Mary in Jerusalem (Acts xii:12), although this may have been the same place. In Ephesus the house of Aquila and Priscilla was a meeting-place (1 Cor. xvi:19), as it was in Rome also. At Laodicea the church met in the house of Nymphas (Col. iv:15), and at Colosse in the house of Philemon (verse 2). Although there may have been in Rome one house in which the whole body of Christians met, yet it would seem that it was usual to hold meetings in a number of houses. The phrases, "and the brethren that are with them" (verse 14), and "all the saints that are with them" (15), seem to imply separate groups of believers.—A. E. Garvie.

of Grace are are often in character very amiable and kind. Such is especially true of Christian Science with their leaders; the blasphemies of that cult are generally covered up by kind and fair speeches. And Satan, who is behind all these things, will shortly be bruised under the feet of His people. Complete victory over all evil is promised for His people and will surely come.

Verses 21–27.—And now the final salutations and the conclusion in praise. "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."

FIRST CORINTHIANS

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The First Epistle to the Corinthians.

Introduction.

The two Epistles addressed to the Corinthians follow, in our New Testament, the Epistle to the Romans. A more logical arrangement would be to put the Epistle to the Galatians next to Romans, for the Galatian Epistle contains the defence of the Gospel and its message is closely linked with the truths unfolded in Romans. Ephesians and Colossians lead upon still higher ground, and if the arrangement of the Pauline Epistles is to be made according to progressive revelation, these two documents should follow the Epistle to the Galatians. While Romans, Galatians, Ephesians and Colossians are pre-eminently doctrinal Epistles, the Epistles to the Corinthians, while not excluding Christian doctrines, are more of a practical character, dealing with very grave and serious conditions which had arisen in the church at Corinth.

The Church at Corinth.

Corinth was one of the foremost Grecian cities, the capital of the Province of Achaia. The Roman pro-consul resided there (Acts xviii:12). Corinth had a very excellent situation, which gave to the city commercially a great advantage and was therefore known for its vast commerce and great wealth. Its large population had a cosmopolitan character, thousands of traders and mariners of all nations visited the far-famed city. Greek civilization flourished here in all its branches. The fine arts were cultivated, athletic games as well as schools of philosophy and rhetoric flourished in this proud city. But the worst feature was an open and very gross licentiousness. The whole city was steeped in immoralities of various kind. Drunkenness, gluttony, and above all religiously licensed prostitution were in Corinth at its worst. The Greek worship of Aphrodite was of the most degraded nature. So great was the moral corruption that the Greek word "*Corinthiazesthai*," which means "to live like a Corinthian," had become a byword of shame and vileness among the profligate heathen of that time. The horrible picture of vileness as given in the Epistle to the Romans (chapter i), written by the Apostle in Corinth, describes some of these moral conditions prevailing in Corinth. It has well been said, "The geographical position of Corinth was its weal and its woe."

The Apostle Paul had been in Athens first and then came to Corinth (Acts xviii:1). While the origin of the church in Rome is obscure, we know that the Corinthian assembly was founded by the Apostle. The record of it we find in Acts xviii. He labored there under great blessing for a year and six months. Jews and Gentiles were saved, among

the former was Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue. But the majority of those who believed were Gentiles, and these belonged to the poorer classes (1 Cor. i:26) with at least two exceptions, Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, and Gaius, a wealthy man, whom Paul had baptized. The historical account of Paul's ministry in Corinth and what happened there should be carefully read, for it throws light upon the Epistles he sent to that church.

What he preached in that wealthy and wicked city, boasting of culture and much learning, filled with an arrogant pride, we learn from his own words in the first Epistle. "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (ii:1–3). He was greatly pressed in spirit while there (Acts xviii:5), yea, in fear and trembling (1 Cor. ii:3). He knew this was one of Satan's strongholds. But God stood by His servant, and while his preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, it was in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power (1 Cor. ii:4).

Both Epistles reveal the deplorable state of the Corinthians and these conditions called forth through the energy of the Holy Spirit this first Epistle. The evil things which had sprung up among the Corinthians had been reported to the Apostle. The house of Chloe (chapter i:11) is mentioned, as informing him about the contentious spirit which was manifesting itself. Probably from the same source, as well as from others, he heard even of worse things which were making headway among the believers. Gross immorality was being tolerated in their midst; lawsuits of Christians were being submitted to courts over which pagan judges presided; they had degraded the blessed memorial feast, the Lord's supper, on account of which some had been dealt with by the Lord. Then there were other matters, such as disorder in public worship, abuse of certain gifts, the forwardness of women. Controversies must have also agitated the Corinthian assembly about the marriage state, certain church matters, such as collections, the exercise of gifts, etc. They had not been brought up Christians, and had everything to learn. This fully explains the character of this first Epistle.

When and Where Was the Epistle Written?

Attempts have been made to question the authenticity of the First Corinthian Epistle. They have not, however, been successful. Testimonies to the authorship of this document are found in the writings of Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and others. Dean Alford states, "As far as I am aware, the authorship of the First Epistle to the Corinthians has never been doubted by any critic of note. Indeed, he who would do so must be prepared to dispute the historical truth of the character of St. Paul."

The Epistle itself answers our question concerning the place and the time when it was written by the Apostle. The statement at the close of the Epistle, printed in some editions of the Bible "written from Philippi," is incorrect. In chapter xvi:8 we read the writer's statement, "But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost." The Apostle Paul was therefore in Ephesus and intended to leave about Pentecost. The Book of Acts shows that he left that city about the time of Pentecost in the year 57. It is quite certain that this first Epistle to the Corinthians was written during the first part of the year 57, probably around the time of Easter. (See 1 Cor. v:7–8). From Acts xix:22. we learn that the Apostle, while still in Ephesus, had sent Timotheus and Erastus to Macedonia. He had given commission to Timotheus to go to Corinth (1 Cor. iv:17; xvi:10). No doubt Timotheus was to prepare the way for the visit of the Apostle (1 Cor. iv:17–19). In all probability the Epistle was taken to Corinth by Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor. xvi:17).

But are the two Corinthian Epistles the only epistles Paul wrote to them? In chapter v:9 Paul says: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators." From this we learn that he had written them a previous letter. Commentators have spoken of this letter as a lost epistle. If it was an inspired document, like these two Epistles and the other Pauline Epistles, it would certainly have been preserved. But the Apostle also wrote letters which were not meant to form parts of the Word of God, which were not inspired, as Romans, Ephesians and the other epistles are. The Epistle therefore mentioned in chapter v:9 was a private letter of the Apostle.

Important and Practical Truths.

The church, constituting the fellowship of the Saints on earth, its place and testimony in the world; the church, its order, membership, spiritual gifts and manifestations, discipline and other important matters, are the truths dealt with in this first Epistle. Then, after the church is viewed as on earth, as His witness, the great truth of the resurrection of the body is made known as well as the fact that when the Lord comes "we shall not all sleep, but shall be changed in a moment." This puts before us the blessed hope, the great consummation, when the church will leave this earthly scene of conflict and failure and become, according to promise, the glorious church.

All about us in the professing church manifests the fullest failure and ruin. The evils which were in the Corinthian church such as sectarianism, self-indulgence and worldliness have become the prominent features of the institution which claims to be the church. For the true believer whose aim it is to be obedient to the Lord in all things, this Epistle has a message and shows him the way which he can follow, though failure and confusion is about him.

The Division of First Corinthians.

On account of the different topics and questions treated of in this epistle, a division into well defined sections is rather difficult to make. The epistle is a church epistle, dealing throughout with matters concerning the church. A careful reading of the epistle will disclose the fact that first, the church is viewed as the temple of God indwelt by His Spirit. As such the church is in the world, though not of the world, and is called to be separated from the world and all its wisdom. The world is hostile to the church; the activities of the enemy of the truth, through the wisdom of this world and the lusts of the flesh are learned from the state of the church in Corinth. The church and her relation to the world, and the testimony for Christ, the church is to give and to maintain in the world, are unfolded in the first ten chapters of this epistle. After that, the church is viewed as the body of Christ. In chapter xi–xiv no more mention is made of the world and the believer's conduct in the world. We are introduced to church order, the activities of the church, the body and its members, the ministries and the exercise of the different gifts, bestowed upon the body. Then follows the great chapter which deals with resurrection. The doctrine of resurrection is unfolded in chapter xv; first, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Himself the head of the body, and also the resurrection and translation of His people. The glorious destiny of the church is therefore revealed at the close of the epistle. The concluding chapter contains an instruction concerning collection and the greetings. This brief survey of the epistle, showing its scope, gives us three main divisions:

I. **THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD. SEPARATION AND TESTIMONY.** Chapter I–X.

1. **What Grace Has Done and the Assurance which Grace Gives.** Chapter i:1–9.

2. **Contrasts.** Chapter i:10–iv.
3. **Corinthian Failures.** Chapters v–vi.
4. **Concerning the Relationship of Man and Woman.** Chapter vii.
5. **Concerning Meats Offered to Idols. Christian Liberty Governed by Love.** Chapter viii.
6. **Paul's Gracious Example.** Chapter ix.
7. **Concluding Warnings and Exhortations.** Chapter x.

II. **THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST.** Chapters xi–xiv.

1. **The Headship of Christ and of Man. The Lord's Supper.** Chapter xi.
2. **The Body and the Members of the Body.** Chapter xii.
3. **The Need and Superiority of Love.** Chapter xiii.
4. **Prophecy and Speaking with Tongues.** Chapter xiv

III. **RESURRECTION AND THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH. CONCLUSIONS.** Chapter xv–xvi.

1. **The Doctrine of Resurrection and the Hope of the Church** Chapter xv.
2. **Instruction and Greetings.** Chapter xvi.

Analysis and Annotations.

I. THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD. SEPARATION AND TESTIMONY.

Chapters i–x.

1. What Grace has Done and the Assurance Grace Gives. i:1–9

In the opening verse of this epistle the Apostle Paul associates with himself the name of Sosthenes. There can be little doubt that he is the same Sosthenes mentioned in Acts xviii:17. Like the great apostle he was once "a persecutor and injurious." The experience through which he passed, when, as an enemy of Christ he received the deserved beating, was instrumental to bring him to Christ. When he was the chief ruler of the synagogue he was an enemy, but now through the grace of God he had become "a brother beloved." It was to call to the remembrance of the sadly drifting Corinthians the former days, as well as the power of God in salvation. Then Paul addresses them as "the church of God which is at Corinth"; and this church of God is composed of those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called Saints. All believers are set apart to God in Christ. Grace has constituted them Saints; but with the gifts grace bestows, there also goes the responsibility of manifesting that separation from the world, from which the church is called out. To the Saints, true believers, sanctified in Christ, set apart to God, the epistle is addressed. Then follows another sentence, which goes beyond the church at Corinth. "With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Thus the true circle of fellowship was laid down, for every local church to observe. As we shall find later in this epistle, the party spirit, sectarianism, was manifesting itself in Corinth and these words of address may be looked upon as a protest

against that unchristian spirit. All who acknowledge Christ as Lord and call upon His name belong to the church. He is their Lord as He is our Lord. Furthermore we learn from these words that the messages of this epistle are for God's people at all times. "In every place" means every place where believers are found to-day. The truths unfolded, the exhortations given, have therefore a universal application; they are the commandments of the Lord to all His people (xiv:37).

Before the Apostle begins to mention the evils which the Corinthian assembly tolerated and which burdened his spirit, he speaks first of all of the grace of God given to them by Jesus Christ. They had been saved and were enriched by Him. The truth they had received, they also communicated "in all utterance and knowledge" to others. They had all the gifts in their midst, and were waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Grace had bestowed all these gifts, and yet they failed to manifest His grace. In possession of such grace and the gifts of grace, they should have walked in humility and should have lived soberly, righteously and godly. But they were walking in an evil way.

The Apostle knew all the evil which was among them as an assembly (and more so did the Holy Spirit know), but before he uncovers their condition, he gives a most precious assurance. He speaks of the faithfulness of God, who had called them into that wonderful fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ. God is faithful! He reckons on God's faithfulness to do in the end all for them which He had promised, so that they would be blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. God does not repent of His gifts and calling. The same assurance is found in other epistles. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. v:23–24). Such a loving and gracious assurance to those who are called according to His purpose, that He is faithful and will bring it about that His

people shall be blameless in that coming day of Christ, leads to self-judgment and repentance.

2. Contrasts. Chapter i:10–iv.

CHAPTER I:10–31.

1. Divisions rebuked. 10–16.
2. The Cross of Christ, the Power of God. 17–31.

The section which begins, after the introductory words, with the tenth verse and ends with the fourth chapter, shows a number of contrasts. There is the contrast of the fact that they were called into the one fellowship. The fact of being called into the fellowship of God's Son, as members of the one body is contrasted with their divisions. There is the contrast of the preaching of the cross, which is foolishness to them that perish, but the power of God to those who are saved. The wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world are likewise contrasted. Jews and Gentiles, what they require and seek are seen in their contrast with those who believe. Every chapter makes these contrasts and through them the blessed truth of the Gospel and the walk of the Saints of God is fully brought out.

As the introduction to the epistle reveals, all believers have one Lord to whom they belong, and God has called all into the one fellowship, the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. No other name is to be owned by His people, but all must be united in that blessed name, and obedience yielded to Him. He therefore beseeches them in that name to present a united confession and testimony "that ye all speak the same thing"; an unmarred fellowship in the Spirit "that there be no divisions among you"; and such a oneness of mind and judgment which becomes those who are one in Christ "that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." And why this exhortation? Because those of the house of Chloe had given to Paul the information that contentions had arisen among them. He mentioned the source without giving the names of the individuals. Those of the house of Chloe

were no doubt deeply spiritual and much exercised over these contentions and the dishonor done to the name of the Lord Jesus. And these contentions, which threatened serious schisms in the one body were connected with teachers, the chosen instruments of the Lord. Some said, "I am of Paul"; others, "I of Apollos"; another party, "I of Cephas." Instead of sitting at the feet of the One, who alone is worthy and is the teacher of His people, they scattered and divided themselves among the different teachers, given by the Lord to the church. It was the beginning of sectarianism, which has been such a curse to the people of God. It did not begin in the blessed assembly of Philippi, nor among the Saints in Ephesus, but among the puffed up, worldly-minded Corinthians. Partyism, sectarianism, is the fruit of the flesh (Gal. v:20). How it has multiplied in Christendom, the evil fruit it has borne, the apostasy which is fostered by it, we need not point out, for all spiritually minded Christians are acquainted with it.

But a fourth party said, "I of Christ." Piously they said, we do not acknowledge Paul, Apollos or Cephas; we call ourselves after Christ. They made Him the head of a party, and put His teaching in contrast with the teachings of the chosen vessels of the Lord, through whom He made known His will. It was only a pretext to discredit the ministry of Paul and the other Apostles. That last named contention was perhaps the worst.

And so the inspired Apostle asks, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Christ was crucified for them and in His Name they had been baptized. In their contentions they were doing wrong to the Person of Christ and to His blessed work. And water baptism is especially mentioned by him. He thanked God, that he had baptized none of them, but Crispus and Gaius, as well as the household of Stephanas. Baptism has been and is a prominent source of the division of the body of Christ. Ritualism has made of it a sacrament which saves and none can go to heaven without it. Other sects make it likewise a necessary act for salva-

tion. Still others teach that water-baptism is the appointed means by which a believer becomes a member of the church, the body of Christ. It is not water-baptism by which a believer becomes a member of the body of Christ; the Holy Spirit alone can do this and does it with every believer (1 Cor. xii:13). Others have gone into the other extreme and reject water-baptism entirely. The Apostle did not do this. "The solemn assumption, by the newly born believer, of the name of Jesus as his Lord (as it is done in baptism) was an act both too important and of too solemn and precious a significance to be regarded lightly by an inspired Apostle." Then the Apostle states his commission. He was not sent by His Lord to baptize. His great mission was to preach the Gospel. "Baptism would surely follow a true reception of his testimony, but that, with all other resulting effects, is kept distinct from the positive and vital work of God by His own Word. We may notice a real difference between the Apostolate of Paul and that of the eleven, as defined at the close of Matthew. The latter were sent expressly to baptize. Paul was not."*

Verses 17–31 unfold the Gospel which he was sent to preach, the Cross of Christ and the power of God to salvation made known by that Cross. He preached that Gospel "not with wisdom of words." All that was attractive to the natural man, such as rhetoric, beautiful language, enticing words, was avoided by the Apostle. He was "rude in speech" (2 Cor. xi:6); he did not preach with enticing words (1 Cor. ii:4). He feared that in any way the power of the Cross of Christ should be made void. He had a complete, a perfect confidence in the Gospel and knew it needed not human embellishment and human schemes to make it effective. All human efforts by rhetoric, sentimental claptrap methods, aim to stir up and to direct the emotions and sympathies of the natural man.

The preaching of the Cross is foolishness to those that are perishing. Unto us who are being saved it is the power of

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*Pridham on Corinthians.

God, for it saves us from the guilt of sins, the power of sin itself and ere long from the presence of sin, in our home-going. And those who are perishing in rejecting the Cross of Christ were never so numerous as to-day. To the "Christian Scientist"—the Unitarian—the Destructive Critic—the new Religionist and others, the preaching of the Cross is foolishness. And the world with all its boasted learning and wisdom did not think of the Gospel and its wonderful plan and power. The nations who boasted of culture and wisdom even in their highest form groped in the dark, and instead of discovering how man can be saved and brought back to God, were dragged down deeper and deeper into sin and despair. And thus God made foolish the wisdom of this world. Therefore the men who today turn their backs upon the Gospel and speak of philosophy, science and wisdom, turn to foolishness once more, which will lead them into the blackness and darkness forever. The preaching of Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, because the Jews required a sign and the Greeks sought after wisdom, but the Cross puts human pride and glory into the dust. And what Jews and Greeks rejected and treated as foolishness is the power and wisdom of God. What men considered foolishness, a crucified Christ, is therefore wiser than men, for it gives to the believer what the wisdom of the world cannot supply. And the "weakness of God", which is Christ crucified through weakness, is more powerful than men; man is saved by it. Thus the charge of Jews and Gentiles, that the cross is foolishness, that it is weakness, is repudiated and the foolishness and weakness of man is thereby demonstrated and laid bare.

And that no flesh should glory in His presence, God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things to confound the things which are mighty. He hath chosen the base things, the despised things and the things which are not to bring to naught the things that are. Therefore not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. God in His sovereignty takes up that which is foolish and weak to manifest His

power. How fully this is evidenced by experience. And the believer is always in the safe place, if he is in the place of self-abasement, self-effacement and weakness. "Of Him are we in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." It is all of God, and all in Christ, and nothing of us or in ourselves. Christ is the wisdom of God.

"Christ is made unto us wisdom from God; and thus with Christianity, for faith, every cloud is lifted. The wisdom that is from God is a casket of priceless jewels; in which the redeemed one finds, not only liberty, but marvelous enrichment. How much is contained in just those three words, 'righteousness, sanctification and redemption!' And they are in an order of progressive fulness, by which we enter more and more into the heart of God."*

Righteousness in Christ is that of which Romans so fully speaks. Our guilt is gone. Righteousness is on our side, covering the believer. The believer is justified by His blood and by faith in Him and fully accepted in the Beloved. And Christ is the believer's sanctification. The work of Christ has separated us unto God; but the believer is also sanctified by the Spirit of God, the Spirit of holiness. In Christ we are holy and walking in the Spirit, obedient to His Word, the believer manifests in his conduct the fact that he is set apart to God. Redemption looks forward to the future, when the believer shall be glorified, and be conformed to the image of the Lord. "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus." Therefore the believer has nothing to glory in himself, but he glories in the Lord. And all this put to shame the Corinthians who made so much of the wisdom of this world and were puffed up.

CHAPTER II.

1. The Apostle's Preaching. 1–5.
2. The Revelation of the Spirit. 6–13.
3. The Helplessness and Ignorance of the Natural Man. 14–16.

*Numerical Bible.

The Apostle had been among them and declared unto them the testimony of God. This he had not done with excellency of speech or wisdom. He preached unto them the Person of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He, who is the wisdom of God, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. ii:3), was his one theme; he determined not to know anything among them but the Person and Work of Christ. He had not come with a system of philosophy, to tickle their ears, but with the highest wisdom made known by revelation. He well knew that in Christ, His blessed Person and in His Cross all their unanswered questions, seeking for light, were answered, and more than that, the power of God through His Spirit would be active in their salvation. When he was with them he had a sense of weakness; he was in fear and much trembling. It shows the deep exercise of his soul. But he also had the special encouragement from the Lord, who spoke to him by a vision (Acts xviii:9–10). He avoided all human eloquence, to which the Corinthians were specially given and attracted, so as not to flatter them. And therefore the Spirit of God manifested power; his preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Their faith, as a result, rested not on the beautiful, persuasive and eloquent words of a man, but on the power of God. Here is the pattern for every preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What unworthy methods are used in our day by some professional evangelists! What sentimental trash is preached by those who are men-pleasers and under the guise of Gospel-preaching aim at their own popularity!*

Among them that are perfect he spoke wisdom. The perfect are those who have believed the Gospel, experienced its power and are in Christ, accepted in the perfect One; they know the truth as it is in Christ. But the wisdom

*For just so far as preachers fill men with admiration for their peculiar style of thought or language, is it evident they are weak in the Spirit, and attract to themselves instead of clearing and establishing souls in the truth whereby the Spirit works in power.—W. Kelly.

Paul spoke was not the wisdom of the world (literally: age), but God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom ordained by God before the world unto our glory. And what is this hidden wisdom, God's wisdom in a mystery which Paul preached to those who had accepted Christ? It is more than Christ crucified. It is Christ glorified, seated at the right hand of God, given as head over all things to the church which is His body. This wisdom of God in a mystery (but now made known) is fully revealed in the Epistle to the Ephesians. It was unrevealed in the Old Testament. The rulers of this age did not know it, for had they known the wonderful wisdom of God they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But the very deed they committed (ignorantly as Peter declared, Acts iii:7) fulfilled the Scriptures, and the Lord of Glory whom they crucified is now the glorified Man filling the throne of God, and believers are one with Him. This is the manifold wisdom of God which is made known by the church (Christ as glorified head and the church His body) to the principalities and powers in heavenly places (Ephes. iii:10).

Interesting is the quotation from Isaiah lxiv: 4. The Prophet speaks of the inability of man to know what God hath prepared in His infinite grace and love for them that love Him. It was hidden from the Prophet. None of them beheld the great truths of the Church as the body of Christ nor the glory connected with it. But now this is changed. God hath revealed it through His Spirit. The Spirit has come and He has made known the hidden wisdom of God. Through Him and His blessed testimony in the Word we know "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." And these things are in Christ. The church is going to share with Him the glory which He has received. And the Spirit in the believer is searching all things, yea, the deep things of God. So the Spirit of God Himself leads the child of God deeper and deeper into this wisdom of God. The more we learn of it, the more we enter into the deep things in blessed fellowship with the Father and the Son, the more we desire to know. This

should be for the child of God, the greatest thing—the Spirit in him searching out the deep things of God. The excuse some Christians make of their inability to grasp certain truths, when they say "it is too deep for me," dishonors the indwelling Spirit. For our poor, little minds all is "too deep;" but not for the Spirit of God.

The things of God cannot be known, save by the Spirit of God. This blessed gift is bestowed upon the believer, so that he can know the things which are freely given to him of God. And these deep and spiritual revelations were transmitted by chosen instruments. "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, comparing (or communicating) spiritual things with spiritual" (Verse 13). Here is a definition of verbal inspiration. The thoughts and revelations of God have been given to us through human instruments, in the words which the Spirit teacheth. We have therefore an inerrant Bible.

A contrast between the natural (psychical) man and the spiritual man concludes this chapter. The natural man, no matter what his mental attainments are, cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. He must be born again and receive the Spirit before he can discern spiritual things. Why do men criticize the Bible, reject its great Truths, ignorant in spiritual things, though learned in the wisdom of the world? They are natural men, not having the Spirit (Jude verse 19).

CHAPTER III.

1. The Carnal State of the Corinthians. 1–9.
2. The Workmen and their Work. 10–15.
3. The Church the Temple of God. 16–17.
4. Warning against Deception and Glorying in Men. 18–23.

Their condition is next uncovered. They did not depend on the Spirit of God and did not enjoy the hidden wisdom and walk in it. They were carnal, mere babes in Christ, in the sense that their growth, their spiritual development had been arrested. Carnal (fleshly) is not equivalent to

"natural." The believer is no longer a natural man, for he is born again. Carnal describes a condition in which the believer walks when he is not subject to the Spirit of God, but is led and governed by natural instincts and motions. Such was their condition. What was merely of man; wisdom, learning, intellect, eloquence and other things, were highly esteemed by them. They were wise in their own conceits and gloried in men. They delighted in and longed for that which is of man, and admired it, therefore the real spiritual truths communicated by the Spirit were unknown to them. The evidence that they walked not according to the Spirit and the wisdom of God, was the strife and factions which existed among them. They were carnal and walked according to man. This party spirit among them had its source not in the Spirit of God, but in the flesh. In it, not the Lord was glorified, but man was exalted. They were more occupied with Paul and Apollos, their persons and talents, than with the Lord Jesus Christ. In this way sectarianism began, as the fruit of the flesh. And the remedy for it is "seeing no man but Jesus only." If the Lord Jesus Christ is owned in His glory, and union with Him is enjoyed, then the carnal condition ends and the believer walks in the Spirit and glories no longer in man. Paul and Apollos were but servants by whom they had believed. It is true Paul planted; Apollos coming after him, watered, but God gave the increase. God is all. And any man, whether he planteth or watereth, shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. They were God's fellow-workmen and the Saints are God's husbandry (tillage), God's building. And so all true servants of the Lord, though differing in gifts, are one in this that they are instruments in God's hand.

Next (verses 10–15), God's fellow-workmen and their work is considered in view of the time "when each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." Paul here calls himself a wise master-builder (an architect). It was not of himself. He did not plan the great building, the church, but it was according to the grace bestowed upon

him. The Lord had chosen him for that. The mystery concerning the church which was hidden in former ages, had been made known to him by revelation. Laboring in Corinth, by preaching the Gospel, he was used by the will and the grace of God to establish the church there. The foundation was laid by him in sound doctrine, according to the revelation given to him. But neither Paul nor Peter nor any other man is the foundation upon which the building rests; there is but one foundation, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. ii:20–21). The foundation is laid, but the question is what fellow-workmen are going to build upon this one foundation. Those who are not at all building upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ the Son of God, are of course, not considered.* Those who own the one foundation may build upon it either gold, silver, precious stones; or wood, hay, stubble. The first three things mentioned are precious and durable; the other three things are worthless and perishable. Gold, silver and precious stones are the fit adornment of the church as the temple of God, but wood, hay and stubble are worthless material fit not for a temple, but for a mud hovel. Gold, silver and precious stones typify the service of the workmen which is of faith, done in obedience to the Word and manifesting the character of the Lord Jesus Christ; while wood, hay and stubble represent what is not of faith, the work and service done in self-will, exalting man instead of the Lord, and therefore disfiguring the temple of God. The workman whose aim is to please God and not men, whose one ambition is to exalt Christ in all his service, who labors for the perfecting of the Saints, the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. iv:12),

*The different anti-christian cults, like Christian Science, Spiritism, New Thought, Theosophy, etc., all lay claim to the name of Christ, but they reject Him and belong therefore to that class who destroy the Temple of God.

builds that which is durable and which can never perish. The workman who pleases men, seeks the applause of man, uses the means and schemes of the world to carry on what is called "Christian work" and in it all is not obedient to the Word of God, builds that which is worthless and his work will perish. A day is coming in which each man's work shall be made manifest. The day is the day of Christ when all believers shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ. He is a consuming fire; and before Him whatever is of man and not of Himself will be burned up. That fire shall try every man's (who is a believer saved by grace) work of what sort it is. Then those who toiled in an unostentatious way, who built upon the one foundation that which glorifies Him, whose work was done in faith, shall find that their work abides and they will receive their own reward. The others will see all their work go up in smoke. They shall suffer loss. There is no reward for them. They shall be saved, yet so as by fire. Like Lot who escaped out of Sodom; but all that he had wrought in Sodom, his righteous soul being vexed, was burned up. But the salvation the believer has is independent of his service and work. Every believer will be saved and live, though what he wrought may be found in that day only fit for the fire.

And the building of which the Apostle speaks is the church, the temple of God, the habitation of God through the Spirit. God's Holy Spirit is dwelling in every member of the body. The temple of God is holy and such are ye. Then the solemn warning "if any man destroy (not defile) the temple of God, him shall God destroy." God's temple in which He dwells, the church, is founded on His truth. The destruction of that temple means therefore the denial of the truth of God or the introduction of false doctrines; critics of the Word, who deny the fundamentals of the faith have well been called "destructive." They are the enemies of the cross, whose end is perdition. They are not saved as by fire, but God is going to deal with them in an awful judgment. In the professing church to-day are uncountable

numbers, who have crept in unawares: they were never born again and therefore they work corruption and will perish. Therefore "let no man deceive himself." The Corinthians were setting aside the wisdom of the Spirit and were being seduced by the wisdom of the world, which is foolishness with God. They marred the temple of God by their carnal spirit, trusting in men and glorying in men. In God's gracious purpose as revealed by the Spirit of God all things were theirs. Paul, Apollos and Cephas were the chosen instruments of God for blessing them. As believers they had all things and belong to none but Christ and through Christ to God Himself.

CHAPTER IV.

1. Servants of Christ and Stewards of the Mysteries of God. 1–5.
2. Contrast Between Self-Glorification and Humiliation. 6–13.
3. Admonition to Beloved Children. 14–21.

Paul speaks of himself and the fellow workmen as servants of Christ and the stewards of the mysteries of God. They were serving under Christ. Apollos, though not an Apostle, is included by Paul. Apollos with his great eloquence probably appealed strongly to the Corinthians and thus the party spirit had been fostered among them. But Paul classes Apollos with himself; he might have told the Corinthians that Apollos was not an Apostle and by this belittle him in their eyes. All were servants of Christ to serve the household of faith and to give meat in due season. The "mysteries of God" are not, as claimed by ritualistic Christendom, the sacraments in their invented "mysterious" actions. The mysteries of God are those blessed hidden things, which were not revealed in former dispensations; but now they are made known and the servants of Christ are the stewards of the blessed truths of Christianity, to guard and to dispense them. And Paul who may be called "the chief steward" of these mysteries had been judged by them, but he expresses his independence of all their judgment. He is responsible to the Lord although he was not aware of anything against himself yet he was not there-

by justified, for the Lord might know something, that he had overlooked. He then points to that day (the day of Christ) when He comes and all His people will have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Then the hidden things will come to light, the counsels of the hearts will be manifest and each man have his praise from God. To that day the servant of Christ, the steward of God's mysteries, yea, every Christian, must look, and serve in anticipation of it. Then all our acts and ways will be examined and judged by the Lord Himself. Paul therefore declared that any judgment now was a judgment "before the time."

And all this he wrote by the Spirit to uncover their foolishness and to counteract their party-spirit. "That ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written, that no one of you be puffed up the one against the other. For who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou hast not received? But, if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" Thus the Spirit of God exposed the folly of the Corinthian party spirit in which they were puffed up and had lost sight of Christ.

Where they had drifted in their carnal spirit by glorying in men and not in Christ is made known by the contrast between their self-glorification, self-exaltation and self-sufficiency and the path of humiliation, suffering and contempt, which is marked out for the true follower of the Lord and the servant of Christ. Here is solemn food for reflection. They were full and rich, reigned as kings, but without the Apostles, who were blessedly sharing the sufferings of Christ and were a spectacle unto the world, to angels and to men. By their profession the Corinthians were waiting for the coming of the Lord, yet in His absence they reigned as kings. They enjoyed prosperity, had all things in abundance, they gloried in all these things while the true servants of Christ were suffering, were in want, following in the path of His blessed life on earth, bearing His reproach, despised and rejected by the world. And so it is to-day that the professing church has fully gone the

Corinthian way; an outward profession, a seeking after the honor of men, the applause of the world, glorying in earthly attainments, rich, increased in goods. With it the offence of the cross has ceased. The cross which has written the sentence of death upon the flesh, which has made the believer dead to the world and the world dead to him; the cross, which demands separation, self-denial, self-surrender and self-sacrifice is denied. And what a record of suffering and privation, persecution, reproach and shame, the Apostle gives! The Corinthians knew nothing of that; nor does the professing church of to-day. But has not the world changed since then? Is not the age becoming better? Is not the leaven of Christianity changing existing conditions so that the reproach of Christ ceases and suffering is changed into worldly honor and glory? A thousand times, No! These are the spurious claims. The world, this present age, man's day, does not change. The world is the same to-day as it was in the days of the apostle. It is still true and will be true till the Lord comes "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecutions." The applause and approval of the world, the recognition by the world of that which is called "religion"—"Christian work and service," is an evidence that that service and religion is not according to the truth of God.

Paul sent Timothy to remind them "of my ways which are in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church." And he was also coming in person. He was not afraid to visit them and meet them face to face; he would come in power. "What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" It was his loving call for them to repent and humble themselves

3. Corinthian Failures. Chapters v–vi.

CHAPTER V.

1. The Tolerated Case of Gross Immorality. 1–5.
2. The Call to Separation. 6–13.

The spiritual declension, the carnal spirit which prevailed among them, had brought forth fruit. One of their members

had committed an act of the grossest immorality, which was an unspeakable outrage, such as was not even named in a licentious city like Corinth, where licentiousness of life was a broadly marked feature of society. It was a case of lawlessness and vileness, which was unknown among the heathen. And this case was tolerated in their midst. Instead of mourning over their sin they were puffed up and did not put away the evil doer from the assembly. If they lacked the personal instruction of the Apostle what to do in such a case, they should have turned to the Lord in sorrow of heart and asked Him for guidance. But they were indifferent. The Apostle now tells them what had to be done. He was among them in spirit, and exercises his apostolic authority in the name and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

"If the enemy had succeeded in drawing aside by the flesh a member of Christ, so that he dishonors the Lord by walking after the flesh as men of the world do, he is put outside, and by the power of the Spirit, as then exercised in their midst by the Apostle, delivered up to the enemy, who is in spite of himself the servant of the purposes of God (as in the case of Job), in order that the flesh of the Christian (which, from his failure to reckon himself dead to sin, had brought him morally under the power of Satan) should be physically destroyed and broken down. Thus would he be set free from the illusions in which the flesh held him captive. His mind would learn how to discern the difference between good and evil, to know what sin is. The judgment of God would be realized within him, and would not be executed upon him at that day when it would be definitely for the condemnation of those who should undergo it. This was a great blessing! although its form was terrible. Marvellous example of the government of God, which uses the adversary's enmity against the saints as an instrument for their spiritual blessing! We have such a case fully set before us in the history of Job. Only we have here, in addition, the proof that in its normal state, apostolic power

being there, the assembly exercised this judgment itself, having discernment by the Spirit and the authority of Christ to do it. Moreover, whatever may be the spiritual capacity of the assembly to wield this sword of the Lord (for this is power), her positive and ordinary duty is stated at the end of the chapter."*

The second epistle will show us how this discipline was greatly blessed to this wicked person upon whom this sentence was pronounced and who was put out of fellowship with God's people. But not only was there individual evil, but the sin affected the whole Corinthian assembly. As Achan's sin was a curse to Israel (Joshua vii), so the leaven of this wickedness was corrupting the whole church. Leaven is seen here once more as a type of evil. A little leaven, a little evil allowed, leavens the whole lump both individually and collectively. The Apostle demands that no evil in any form, whether moral or doctrinal, is to be tolerated among those who are Christ's. Christ is our passover Lamb sacrificed for us. In Him all believers are constituted holy. With the passover there was inseparably linked the feast of unleavened bread, showing that redemption is holiness. As the Jew had to put away all leaven in eating the passover, so the Christian must purge out all leaven and be in an unleavened condition, in sincerity and in truth before God. Even the smallest bit of leaven, the least deviation from the truth of God, in holding some unscriptural doctrine, or any other evil, will, if not purged, ultimately leaven the whole lump. Christendom today is a solemn witness to this truth. The whole professing church is leavened by the leaven of the Pharisees (Ritualism); the leaven of the Sadducees (Higher Criticism or infidelity); the Corinthian leaven (vain glory and worldliness) and the Galatian leaven (Legalism). Then follows the command, "therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Such discipline demanded by the Holy Spirit is almost unknown today in that which professes to be the

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*Synopsis.

church of God. It has been said that it is uncharitable and harsh to deal in this way with those who are evil in doctrine or practice. It is not that, but rather a gracious measure, to humble such an one and bring him back to the place of blessing.

CHAPTER VI.

1. Concerning Disputes before Heathen Courts. 1–7.
2. The Holiness of Believers; Their Bodies the Temples of the Holy Spirit. 8–20.

Instead of settling their disputes amongst themselves, as it becomes the Saints of God, they brought their difficulties before a heathen court. In doing this they had lost sight of the dignity of their calling. The Saints of God are to reign with Christ and share His glory; they shall judge the world and angels in that day. Going to a heathen court to have these matters settled by one who was not a child of God, but unrighteous, was unworthy of them; they were making known their own shame before the world. If they had remembered that coming day of glory, when as Saints they were to participate in the judgment of the world, they would not have acted in such a way. They would have gladly suffered wrong themselves and permitted themselves to be defrauded instead of rushing with their grievances before a heathen court. Matthew xviii:15–18 shows the true way for believers to settle such matters. They were doing wrong and defrauding their own brethren. In all this they dishonored God and denied their relationship to Him. And these Corinthian failures are today in professing Christendom fully developed.

The unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. He reminds them what some of them had been in their unconverted state. They had practised the vile things of the flesh, which were so common in Corinth. And connected with this there is a warning. If the little leaven was allowed to work, if they continued in the evil ways they were following, they would surely relapse into their former state. But even more, the Apostle reminds them what the grace of God had done for them in saving them from such a life.

They had been translated from the power of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son of His love. "And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." The washing has nothing to do with baptism, as some claim. Through regeneration (called in Titus iii:5, "the washing of regeneration"), the believing sinner becomes clean every whit (John xiii:10). Then he is also sanctified in Christ, set apart unto God. And the Holy Spirit takes possession of the believer as His own temple. This is the meaning here of "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." He is the seal.

Then the question concerning the believer's body is introduced. A believer is no longer under the law as to meats and foods, as the Jews were. "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not profitable." A believer is not to be brought under the power of any of these things. He is not in bondage to anything, but is to have perfect liberty. To be a slave to anything, for instance, a habit, would be wrong. Meats are for the belly; they are but temporary and will pass away. "God will bring to nought both it (the belly) and them (the meats)." But the body itself is something different. In the body of the believer the Holy Spirit is the abiding guest, the divine Indweller. The body is therefore for the Lord and the Lord for the body. The body has the promise of redemption. God, who raised up the Lord, will also raise us up by His own power. And the bodies of believers are members of Christ, joined to Himself by the Spirit of God. "For he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit." And all is in warning against the horrible sin, which was so prominent in Corinth, fornication. The bodies of believers belong to the Lord. They are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Therefore we are not our own. Furthermore, all this has been accomplished by the great redemption price, the price paid upon Calvary's cross. The body must be yielded to God as a living sacrifice. "For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, which are God's."

4. Concerning the Relationship of Man and Woman.

CHAPTER VII.

1. The Single and the Married Life. 1–9.
2. Separation and Divorce. 10–16.
3. Abiding in the Different Callings. 17–24.
4. The Unmarried and Married in Contrast. 25–40.

It is evident from the first verse that the Corinthians had inquired of the Apostle about marriage and the relationship of man and woman. It was an important question in a city of the character of Corinth, so full of immorality. This chapter answers their question and gives instructions concerning the unmarried and those who are joined together in marriage. "It is good for man not to touch a woman" has been used as sanctioning celibacy and discrediting the marriage union. Such is not the case. The unmarried state has for the Christian, who is fully devoted to the Lord, certain spiritual advantages. "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord" (Verse 32). Compare this also with the words of our Lord in Matthew xix:4–12. The Apostle Paul was unmarried (verse 8) and denied himself the lawful privilege of having a wife (ix:5) to be free in all things to serve the Lord. But there were great dangers, especially in heathen Corinth, where fornication was religiously sanctioned. Therefore the Apostle enjoins them that every man should have his own wife and every woman have her own husband. And in this relationship, fully approved by the Lord both must be true to its natural claims. As to the body, the husband belongs to the wife and the wife to the husband. They are not to defraud each other. However, by mutual consent they may be apart for a season to give themselves unto prayer. And this he wrote not as a command, but as a permission. "The Apostle gives his thoughts and judgment as a spiritual man, his mind animated and guided by the Spirit, and contrasts it with inspiration and what the Lord said."

Then the question of separation and divorce is taken up. The indissolubleness of the marriage tie had been declared by

the Lord and is here confirmed. "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." (Matthew xix:6, 9). And so the Apostle writes that which is a command not coming from himself but from the Lord, that if a separation takes place between husband and wife, she is to remain unmarried, or be reconciled. The husband is not to put away his wife. How little heed is paid to all this among professing Christians in our days. The increase of unscriptural divorces is appalling.

Next the case of mixed marriages is considered. Most likely many such cases were in existence in Corinth. "According to the law a man who had married a woman of the Gentiles (and was consequently profane or unclean) defiled himself, and was compelled to send her away; and their children had no right to Jewish privileges; they were rejected as unclean. (See Ezra x:3). But under grace it was quite the contrary. The converted husband sanctified the wife, and *vice versa*, and their children were reckoned clean before God; they had part in the ecclesiastical rights of their parent. This is the sense of the word "holy," in connection with the question of order and of outward relationship towards God, which was suggested by the obligation under the law to send away wife and children in a similar case. Thus the believer was not to send away his wife, nor to forsake an unbelieving husband. If the unbeliever forsook the believer definitively, the latter (man or woman) was free—"let him depart." The brother was no longer bound to consider the one who had forsaken him as his wife, nor the sister the man who had forsaken her as her husband. But they were called to peace, and not to seek this separation; for how did the believer know if he should not be the means of the unbeliever's conversion? For we are under grace."*

*Synopsis of the Bible J. N. D.

Of course the unbelieving husband by being united to a believing wife was not actually sanctified. This requires faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But the unbelieving husband of a Corinthian household, whose wife was a believer, was no longer in the darkness of heathendom; he was surrounded by the light of Christianity and had come through being linked with a believer under its blessed influence. And so the offspring of such a union. Grace sought both the unbelieving husband and the children. But mixed marriages are never to be encouraged. 2 Corinthians vi:14 forbids them.

Verses 17–24 are parenthetical. And every man is to abide in the calling wherein he is called. Each is to abide with God (verse 24) in his own particular calling and thus glorify God in it. A believer is to be above all earthly circumstances. Yielding obedience to God is the one great thing. "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."

The final paragraph of this chapter (verses 25–40) gives the contrasts between those who marry and those who do not. Let us heed these blessed exhortations of such importance to God's people. "I say, brethren the time is short." If that was true then, how much more so is it in the significant days in which our lot is cast. With the ever increasing signs of the ending of the age and the coming of the Lord about us, we know that the time is short. In view of this fact those who have wives are to be as though they had none; they who weep, who pass through suffering, as though they wept not; they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use the world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away. We are to be without carefulness and distraction, so that we can serve the Lord. Much here is the advice of the Apostle concerning yielding to nature, which is perfectly lawful, or not yielding to it as to marriage. It is not the commandment of the Lord. Nevertheless we must remember that if he gives his apostolic advice, it is inspired advice, the advice of the Holy Spirit.

5. Concerning Meats Offered to Idols. Christian Liberty Governed by Love.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. Concerning things sacrificed to idols and knowledge 1–6.
2. True knowledge and liberty governed by love. 7–13.

Another question is raised concerning things offered to idols. Should Christians eat what had been offered in sacrifice to idols? These idol-offered meats were generally sold in the meat market. Would a believer be defiled by using such meats? They all had knowledge concerning these matters. But mere knowledge without love only puffeth up. Love is better than knowledge, for it edifieth, and this love they had to manifest in the matter of eating things sacrificed to idols. As to knowledge, how little man knoweth. How true it is "if any man think he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." Pride because of knowledge is a dangerous thing, and much of this we see among Christians. True knowledge of God produces love for Him and such a one is known of God. Then the question is taken up. They had the knowledge that an idol is nothing in the world. There is none other God but one, "the Father, of whom are all things and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by Him."

But not all had this perfect knowledge. Some had the conception that the idol is a reality, a god, though a false one; they did not grasp the fact that an idol is nothing. They ate of the meat, feeling that it had been an idol sacrifice, and their conscience in these scruples being weak is defiled. They were therefore in bondage and did not enjoy the liberty in Christ. Verse 8 shows that eating meat or not eating meat has no advantage whatever before God. The important thing then is stated. "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours becomes a stumbling block to them that are weak." One who is weak in faith (not possessing true knowledge) sees a brother eating meat in the idol's temple and by it he will become emboldened

to do violence to his conscience and do the same thing, and in doing it he sins.* He acts not in faith, but imitates another and worse things may follow. By his act the brother who has knowledge may be more than a stumbling block. The weak brother may perish, for whom Christ died, through such an example. The disastrous effect is put in the strongest term. Of course the weak brother will not actually perish, but in his conscience he will be guilty. However grace will step in and prevent this threatening danger. No sheep or lamb of His shall perish; for none can pluck them out of His hand. We are our brother's keepers, not their Saviour. Well has it been said, "out of our careless hands they fall for safety into His." But sinning against brethren and wounding their weak consciences is sinning against Christ. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth" (verse 2). The Apostle then states that he will relinquish his knowledge and liberty in case it would offend his brother, "Lest I make my brother offend." Christian liberty is to be governed by love for the brethren.

All this is practical truth and much needed in our days of worldliness and laxity in the Christian walk. It is a good rule to ask in all our walk and in the use of our liberty, how will it affect the fellow-members of the body? We refer the reader to Romans xiv where the same truth is treated. (See the annotations there.)

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*"The liberty of God's children is absolute, but they are expected to use it as imitators of God. We have to consider not ourselves only, but both our brethren and the world. A saint may be walking without circumspection, and yet with an unruffled conscience. But this is dangerous. Heed must be taken lest, while enjoying, in one sense blamelessly, our liberty, we become unwittingly a stumbling block to others. An ostentatious use of liberty rarely fails to injure the boaster and those who may observe his ways. True grace, because it is free and knows its happiness in fellowship with God, makes no effort to *seem* free. Rather it will seek to use its liberty in love, considering the weak, and neither despising them, nor tempting them by wrong example to act in anything beyond their faith."—Pridham.

6. Paul's Gracious Example.

CHAPTER IX.

1. The Apostle's rights. 1–14.
2. He waives his rights for the Gospel's sake. 15–27.
3. The race-course and the crown. 24–27.

The great principle laid down in the previous chapter to forego one's Christian liberty, the Apostle Paul enforced by his own example. He was an Apostle and had seen the Lord Jesus, from whom he had received his apostleship (Gal. i:1). From the second verse we learn that some had not recognized him as an Apostle; these must have been false teachers. But the Corinthians knew he was an Apostle. Through his testimony they had been converted so that he could say "for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." As an Apostle he had certain rights, but he did not make use of them. All his rights and his privileges had been given up by him. The law also affirmed his claim, for it forbad the muzzling of the oxen that treadeth the corn. Those that sow spiritual things are perfectly entitled to reap carnal (material) things. Other teachers used this God-given right and accepted their material things; and he had a greater claim for this upon the Corinthians, for he taught them first. "Nevertheless we have not used this power, but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the Gospel of Christ." The Lord certainly had ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. All this he had not used; he had not made use of what was his right. Nor did he write these words that his claims might be satisfied. He did not want his glorying made void. What was his glory? Not the preaching of the Gospel in itself. Necessity was laid upon him and "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel?" "For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward; but if not of mine own will, I am entrusted with a stewardship."* And what is his reward? In what does he glory? His answer is "that when I preach the gospel, I make the gospel without charge, so

*The translation of verse 17 in the A. V. is faulty.

as not to use, as belonging to me, my right in the gospel." In this way the gospel was not hindered; it was made more effective. For being free from all, free from the control of any person, he had made himself the servant of all, that he might win as many as he could. This was his reward, to preach the gospel gratuitously. Governed by love he had become a servant of all. His rights were given up, but he did not insist upon his Christian freedom, but gave up his liberty in order "that I might by all means save some." He did not seek his own things but the things of Christ. The most blessed self-sacrifice on behalf of Christ and the Gospel of Christ marked his service. How few such servants, who give up, self-denying, self-sacrificing, waiving their rights for the Gospel sake, are found today in Christendom? But how many are seeking their own!

The concluding paragraph is fully in line with these statements of the Apostle. He uses as an illustration the Greek stadium, the race-course, well known to the Corinthians on account of the games on the isthmus of Corinth. In order to run successfully and obtain the prize, self-denial was necessary. There was a prize for him who won. Spiritually, not one, but all may obtain the prize, if all run well. And in the race every man that striveth for the mastery, to obtain the victory, is temperate in all things. They do it to obtain a fading crown, a wreath; but we have the promise of a crown that fadeth not away, an everlasting crown.

And if those who strive for earthly honor deny themselves, how much more should we practice self-denial in view of the crown of glory! "I therefore so run not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." What did the Apostle mean by the latter statement? The word "castaway" is found also in the following passages: Rom. i:28; 2 Cor. xiii:5, 6, 7; 2 Tim. iii:8; and Titus i:16. In these passages it is translated by "reprobate." In Heb. vi:8 it is translated "rejected." Did he mean that he feared to be lost himself? Or did he only

fear disapproval as a workman, whose service is rejected and to be counted unworthy of a crown? The statement does not clash with the teaching of the eternal security of the believer. The Apostle personally does not fear for himself, as no true believer need to fear, but he applies an important principle to himself. Salvation and a holy walk are inseparably connected. Preaching alone will not do, but the truth must be lived.

"There would be difficulty indeed, if the apostle spoke of having been born again and afterwards becoming a castaway: in this case life would not be eternal. But he says nothing of the sort. He only shows the solemn danger and certain ruin of preaching without a practice according to it. This the Corinthians needed to hear. Preaching or teaching truth to men without reality, self-judgment and self-denial before God, is ruinous. It is to deceive ourselves, not Him who is not mocked. Nor do any Christians more deeply need to watch and pray than those who are much occupied with handling the word of God or guiding others in the ways of the Lord. How easy for such to forget that *doing* the truth is the common responsibility of all, and that speaking it to others ever so earnestly is no substitute for their own obeying it as in the sight of God!"*

It is a warning against an empty profession of Christianity without the manifestation of the power. Where there is true salvation and eternal life, it is proven by a godly walk. The Apostle in these personal statements shows that all the blessed knowledge he had and with it the most positive assurance of eternal glory, did not make him careless, but prompted him to still greater earnestness and continued self-denial. He knew nothing in his life of the self-indulgence which characterized so many in the Corinthian assembly; he kept his body under. But he also knew, as every Christian should know, that the grace which had saved him, which taught him to live soberly, righteously and godly, would also keep him and enable him to persevere through all hindrances.

*W. Kelly.

7. Warnings and Exhortations.

CHAPTER X.

1. Warnings from Israel's past history. 4–7.
2. Exhortations. 15–33.

The same subject is continued with this chapter. The concluding paragraph of the previous chapter is illustrated from Israel's history, as the professing people of God. What happened unto them has a typical meaning for us. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples (types), and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world (ages) are come." He speaks of "our fathers (Israel's fathers) were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

God had delivered them out of Egypt; the cloud covered them and the sea divided, for their salvation and for the judgment upon the Egyptian hosts. The Lord had made them free to serve Him and it is written "they believed the Lord and His servant Moses." In this sense they were baptized, or set apart, unto Moses as his disciples. And the person who accepts and professes Christianity is set apart to Christ. All who were under the covering and protecting cloud and who had passed through the sea, ate the same spiritual food, and drank the same spiritual drink, of the rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ. The Lord in infinite love provided for them by giving them food and water, which both are typical of Christ. All ate and drank of the miraculous supply. But what became of the great mass of this people? "But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness." They lusted after evil things; some became idolators; some fornicators; some tempted the Lord by trying His patience and murmuring. Judgment followed. In one day 23,000 fell;* others were destroyed by serpents

*See Numb. xxv:9; when 24,000 are mentioned. See for an explanation of this alleged discrepancy annotations on Numb. xxv. Vol. I.

and perished by the destroyer. And all this was written for the admonition and warning of the Corinthians. It shows how those who enjoy divine privileges and lay claim to the title of being God's people, but do not live in separation, do not please God. They that are in the flesh cannot please God, though they may profess Christianity and partake of divine things. Many of the Corinthians were in this dangerous condition. And the admonition and warning is for us as well.

"The warning is for us all. We have no right to say, 'Well, but we are true Christians, and therefore we need not trouble about these things.' These are things which as principles are of the greatest importance for us to realize. There are evil things for which we may lust as they lusted. If God prevents the extreme result for us, that is His mercy, but the effect of our disregarding the warnings may be that our lives may be alas, how greatly spoiled and disfigured and made quite other than He would have them, by our laxity!"*

Two important statements follow. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." This is our responsibility. But how can a believer stand in this world, so dangerous and full of evil? Only by faith can we stand, and faith is confidence in God. As we have no self-confidence, but trust in Him alone and walk in fellowship with Him we shall stand and be upheld. Then there is the blessed comforting statement: "God is faithful." He does not allow that we are tempted above that we are able, but he provides a way to escape. "Wherefore, dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." It meant for the Corinthians the idolatry of heathendom. But there is also a more subtle idolatry. That believer is kept from all idolatry who is wholly devoted to the Lord and who gives to Him constantly the *pre-eminence*. *Devotedness* to God keeps from idols.

The second half of this chapter contains exhortations about idolatry and the believer's walk in the midst of the

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*Numerical Bible.

corruption which is in the world. The Lord's supper is significantly introduced at this point. As we find in the next chapter, it is the memorial feast of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us. Blessed and precious is this feast of communion. And in eating of it there is identification with the body of Christ, for "we are all partakers of that one bread." In the Lord's supper, many of the essential truths of Christianity are revealed and enjoyed by faith, in the power of the Spirit, as an act of true worship. If the believer then realizes that he is a partaker of Christ and tastes afresh of His love and gazes in hope towards the coming glory, he will have nothing to do with idols, nor have any fellowship with darkness. As he has written before, the idol is nothing, meaning the supposed gods of the heathen. However, idolatry was a horrible reality, by which the souls and bodies of men were corrupted. The heathen sacrificed in idol-worship to demons and not to God. And how can he who drinks the cup of the Lord, the Lord of all, drink also the cup of demons? Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of demons. In doing this they would provoke the Lord to jealousy. Every wicked doctrine and false worship is backed by demons and participation in it means identification.* The instructions call for a cautious and separated walk, as it becometh those who are the Lord's. God is to be before the heart of the believer in all things. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

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*This is especially true of the anti-christian movements of our times, such as Christian Science, Theosophy and others. (1 Tim. iv:1.)

II. THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST.

Chapters xi–xiv.

1. Headship, and the Position of Woman. The Lord's Supper.

CHAPTER XI.

1. The Headship of Christ and of the Man; Position of Woman. 1–16.
2. The Lord's Supper. 17–31.

The opening verse belongs to the preceding chapter. And now after the church in relation to the world had been treated by the Apostle in the first part of this epistle, he takes up next the affairs of the church itself. Here, too, much had to be corrected into which the Corinthian assembly had drifted. After the brief and excellent word of praise by which he expressed his confidence in them (verse 2), he calls their attention to an important truth, which in our times is not only overlooked, but often belittled and altogether set aside. It concerns the headship of Christ, of the man, and the position of woman. It is evident that Corinthian women had assumed in the church a position which was not according to God's order in creation. They had not yet learned it. God's order in creation has to be manifested in the church. This order is unaltered by redemption, though in Christ there is neither male nor female, yet has God assigned to man and to woman their respective places which must be maintained. This divine order the Apostle states. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." These are weighty and blessed statements. Christ is the Creator, the Lord of all, but He also became man and is the "First born of all Creation" (Col. i:15–16). He is therefore in possession of the headship in creation, and head of man as the Man, as He is also the head of the church. God has given Him the pre-eminence in all things.

And the head of the woman is the man; this is the place which God has given to woman on earth. In creation the head of the woman is man. Yet what would man be without the woman!—she is necessary to him.

"The woman is the glory of man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." To these statements about the headship of Christ, the headship of man, he being head of the woman, the Apostle adds "and the head of Christ is God." Christ is the eternal Son of God, co-equal in Godhead in every way. He is God. But the Only-Begotten humbled Himself; He took on the creature's form and "was made of a woman." And as Man He has taken the place under God, yielding perfect obedience in all things. In all His redemption work He is under God, not only on earth, but now in glory, as the glorified Man at the right hand of God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory.

The purpose of the declaration of this order of the ways of God in creation was to set them right on a matter which in our days is often sneered at. Man praying or prophesying is not to cover his head. Woman praying and prophesying is to have a covering on her head. The man who covereth his head in praying dishonoreth his head. Woman uncovered dishonoreth her head. A covering on the head is the outward sign of being in the place of subjection. An uncovered head signifies the opposite. The order which God has instituted as to the place of man and woman, His people are bound to respect. It may appear a little thing, yet if disobeyed, as it was in Corinth (where women seemed to be puffed up and refused to follow this order), it becomes a stepping stone towards more serious evil. Woman is to testify to her place of subjection by covering her head in praying and testifying. Man similarly engaged does not cover his head, for the authority is vested in man "for as much as he is the image and glory of God, but the woman

is the glory of man."* How all this is denied and woman aims to take leadership and rulership in place of man, we need not to enlarge upon.

Another reason is given why praying women should wear outwardly a sign of subjection—because of the angels. Angels are watchers and attendants of the heirs of salvation. As the church is known to them and by it they know the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. iii:10), so are they observers of Christian worship and the order and behavior of God's people in His house. And angels themselves are in subjection and yield perfect obedience.

Then the church itself is brought into view. The first thing is not the fact that Christians are the members of Christ, who constituted the body of Christ, the gifts of the body and the exercise of these gifts. The Lord's supper, that blessed memorial of His love in His sacrificial death, the love which passeth knowledge, is the first thing mentioned. "Do this in remembrance of Me" was His request in the night in which He was betrayed. When the Holy Spirit came and the company gathered in fellowship we read at once of "the breaking of bread," to remember Him (Acts ii:46). The first thing in the assembly must be to remember Christ, His death, His presence in glory, His coming again. But before the Apostle tells them what he had received of the Lord, he had to reprove them for their disorder and their divisions. In these sects and parties they denied the very truth of the church as the one body, the body of Christ. They had a custom of eating a meal in connection with the Lord's supper. And at this meal some drank to excess, while it seems this custom of a preliminary meal led to a complete neglect or unworthy observance of the supper itself. Then he writes of what he had received of the Lord.

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*If woman persists in leaving the place (in subjection) where her glory shines, if she will persist in pushing out into the glare of public life and thrust herself into the struggle and grinding competition that wears out men's lives and tenderer instincts, let her not be astonished if she lose her distinctive grace—the delicate sheen that cannot bear the world's rough, unhallowed ways."—Prof. Moorehead.

How simple it all is! "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." The Lord's supper is to remember Him, to show the Lord's death till He come. And all else that man has made of it is pure invention, if not wicked blasphemy, like the idolatrous mass of Romanism. And how often shall this feast, which delights His heart, where God's children worship and adore, be kept? In Apostolic days it was evidently kept every Lord's day (Acts xx:7).

And all God's children, whom the Lord has received, have a right to the Lord's table and gather thus around His blessed Person. The only things which bar from the Lord's table, are evil doctrines and an evil walk. And the Lord's supper may be eaten unworthily. He, who comes to the Lord's table without self-judgment, eats and drinks of it unworthily. We eat and drink unworthily when we partake without discerning the Lord's body and blood represented by the bread and the wine, for we do not then shew to God the death of Christ. Let a man examine (judge) himself before eating or else he eats for his own judgment. This is God's way of producing and maintaining holiness in the church. And the Corinthians had experienced that the Lord dealt with a number of them in judgment. Upon many the Lord had laid His hand, many were weak and stricken with disease, while others had fallen asleep. It was mercy, "but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."*

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* "The world is condemned. Sin in the Christian is judged; it escapes neither the eye nor the judgment of God. He never permits it; He cleanses the believer from it by chastening him, although He does not condemn, because Christ has borne his sins, and been made sin for him. The death of Christ forms then the centre of communion in the assembly, and the touchstone of conscience, and that, with respect to the assembly, in the Lord's supper."—Synopsis,

2 The Body and the Members of the Body.

CHAPTER XII.

1. Concerning spiritual manifestations and diversities of gifts. 1–11.
2. The Body and its members. 12–31.

In this interesting, important chapter, spiritual manifestations are first mentioned. The church is the body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in the church. And first the distinctive mark of the Spirit is stated. As heathen they had been under the control of evil spirits, who had deluded them with idolatrous worship. And these evil spirits were still active, creeping in among Christians, pretending to be the Spirit of God and counterfeiting His manifestations. It was so then and it is so now. Seducing spirits and doctrines of demons are in fullest evidence in the professing church. Satan transforms himself into an angel of light; he imitates and produces certain manifestations, as he must have done among the Corinthians; but Satan never owns Jesus as Lord. The work of the Holy Spirit is to exalt the Lord Jesus. The Spirit does not even speak of Himself, but always glorifies Christ, giving Him the right place. The evil spirits do the opposite; they degrade Him and attempt to rob Him of His glory. This they do through evil doctrines. It amounts to the same as saying "anathema" (curse) "Jesus" as Jews and Gentiles did in rejecting Jesus as Lord. No man speaking by the Spirit of God would say that. And all who own Him as Lord do so by the bidding and the teaching of the Holy Spirit.*

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*"If the nighest honor is not freely and sincerely given to the name of Jesus, its only other place is utter degradation. Between 'anathema' and 'Lord' there is no other place which it can justly occupy. The wide space which seems morally to intervene between a living and adoring faith and a deliberate and positive denial of that name, is ignored by the Spirit, in His estimate of human character, as a nullity and a deception. With Him men are either believers or unbelievers, confessors or deniers of the Lord. Now, by the Apostle's testimony, to confess Him truly is impossible but by the Holy Ghost."—Pridham.

The Holy Spirit, the divine Person, is on earth and manifests His power in the body of Christ, the church. The Lord Jesus having accomplished redemption, believers on His name are ransomed and cleansed by His blood, and united to Him, as His body, and the Holy Spirit dwells in each member of this body. It is through the Spirit that communion with the Head is realized and maintained. In His gifts the presence of the Spirit of God is therefore manifested in the members of the body. This is now more fully treated in this chapter. In verses 4–6 we hear of the Spirit, the Lord, and God; the same Spirit—the same Lord, and the same God. Yet there is not a division into three classes of gifts, but the same thing is seen in three relations. The diversities of gifts are by the same Spirit; through Him they are bestowed. These gifts are in relation to the Lord; they are to be used in ministries, that is, in service for the Lord, under whom and for whose glory these gifts are to be used. And the whole operations are of God, who worketh all in all. All this is of course confined to the members of the body of Christ. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man (a true believer) for profit." The gift bestowed upon one member is for the whole body, all are to profit by it. The possession of a gift makes the believer a debtor to the other members of Christ. Nine gifts by the same Spirit are mentioned. They are the following: The Word of Wisdom; the Word of Knowledge; Faith; the gift of Healing; the Working of Miracles; Prophecy; Discerning of spirits; tongues and interpretations of tongues. It will be seen that the miraculous sign-gifts hold a secondary place, the last being speaking in tongues and their interpretations. The word of Wisdom stands at the head of these gifts and is followed by the word of Knowledge. They stand for the gifts to understand the deep things of God and to impart them unto others. It means a spiritual apprehension of the truth of God in all its phases and the power to communicate this truth to others. The gift of faith is a special endowment of confidence in God and His promises, which enables the possessor to lay hold

on God and accomplish great things. All believers have faith and live by faith. The gift of healing and the working of miracles, were sign-gifts for the inauguration of the Christian dispensation. There is no intimation that these miraculous gifts were to continue in the church throughout this age. In Ephesians, the highest revelation concerning the body of Christ, the permanent gifts for the edifying of the body are mentioned, but gifts of healing, working miracles or speaking in tongues are omitted. Nor is there a promise in the Word that those extraordinary gifts are to be restored by the Spirit of God to the church before the Lord comes for His saints. Signs and miracles will take place at the close of this age, but they are the lying things of Satan (2 Thess. ii). Anything which claims to be a restoration of miraculous gifts, as it is the case among certain sects, must be looked upon with grave suspicion.* Besides prophecy and the discerning of spirits (trying the spirits whether they are of God) the gift of tongues and their interpretation are mentioned. As we find later the Corinthians, in their bad spiritual state, esteemed the gift of tongues the highest; the Spirit of God, however, gives to it an inferior place. They were almost destitute of the exercise of the highest gift of wisdom and knowledge and magnified, what was for outward demonstration, because it exalted themselves.

Of much importance is verse 13: "For in one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." This refers to the formation of the body. The baptism mentioned in this verse is not water-baptism. Water baptism does not save nor can this

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*"The exercise of the gift of healing and similar gifts was never discretional. They were manifested only in their fitting season, and could only work effectually by the immediate will of God. Power is His, and always in His hands. If Trophinus was sick, the wish of Paul could not restore him. Yet the believer can come to the Lord in prayer and claim His power. Our refuge in time of need must be sought, not in God's gifts, but in the faithfulness of the Giver.

ordinance put any one as a member into the true church, the one body. The baptism is the baptism of the Spirit. It took place on the day of Pentecost. On that day the Spirit was poured out and while He filled every believer, He also united them into one body. Then the body of Christ was formed once for all by this baptism. Since that day whenever a sinner trusts in Christ he is at once joined to that body and shares in the one Spirit. Many Christians speak of repeated baptisms by the Spirit and refer to certain experiences as being new baptisms. In the light of this verse all this is incorrect. Scripture knows only one baptism. And all believers drink of one Spirit; they are all made partakers of one and the same Spirit.

And this body which was called into existence by the Spirit on the day of Pentecost is not one member, but many. There are many members, yet but one body. And the different members in that body are dependent the one on the other, and have need of each other, just as it is in the human body. And God hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him. Each member has his own place with a gift, a function, which is suitable for it. Nothing in this body is left to man himself. It is His church and God orders the place of each and of all in that body. Therefore, self-choosing is excluded. How all this is marred, if not wholly forgotten, in the professing church, is only too evident. The conditions to-day, the divisions in the body, the false doctrines and unscriptural practices throughout Christendom, are plainly the result of having set aside the truth concerning the one body.

And those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. "And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our comely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need; but God has tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked." As it is in the human body, so also is it in the body of Christ. There was to be no self-exaltation, as it undoubtedly was among

the Corinthians on account of the gifts which they had so abundantly, especially the sign-gifts. They looked down upon other members who were less prominent. And this was responsible for the threatening division in the body. The blessed injunction is that the members should have the same care one for another, then there would be no schism in the body.

If one member suffers, all suffer, because they are in one body indwelt and united by the same Spirit; and if one member be honored, all rejoice with it. And this body is the body of Christ; He is the head of the body and wants to manifest Himself through His body. This is the church collectively, but the same are the members severally. The order of how God has bestowed gifts follows (verse 28). Again the gift of tongues, in which the Corinthians abounded, on account of which grave disorders and disturbances had come in, is put last.

"And the Corinthians then, as others of late, had to hear, whether they heeded or not, that those striking displays of power in which they found their childish surprise and delight, like the world without, were not the highest, that there were gifts relatively first and second and third, the last-named being the very one they had been abusing to no small disorder and hindrance of edification in the assembly."

Verses 29–30 show another important principle. All cannot be apostles, prophets, leaders, workers of miracles, etc. God does not bestow all these different gifts upon one individual. They are distributed as it pleases Him, to each member as He sees fit. Ministry in the body of Christ is the exercise of a gift. The Corinthians in their puffed up condition had a selfish ambition to have all these gifts concentrated in every member.

"The Corinthians' folly was not greater in wishing all the gifts to be in each and all the saints, than the modern theory of arrogating all, as far as public ministration goes, to a single official. The one was ignorant vanity before the truth was fully revealed in a written form; the other is more guilty presumption in presence of the acknowledged word

of God, which condemns every departure from His principles, and the great fact of the one body with its many members, wherein the Holy Spirit works to glorify the Lord Jesus."*

He tells them to covet earnestly the best gifts and he would show unto them a more excellent way. This more excellent way is the way of love of which we hear in the next chapter.

3. The Need and Superiority of Love.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. The Pre-eminence of Love. 1–3.
2. Love described in its characteristics. 4-7.
3. Love never faileth; its Permanence. 8–13.

This chapter is a most blessed exaltation of love. The word "charity" is an unfortunate mistranslation. The Greek word for love used in the New Testament was never used by the Greek heathen classical writers. In its meaning it was unknown among the Gentiles. God is love. As His people, members of His body, we know the love of God manifested in the gift of God's well beloved Son. And this love is shed abroad in the hearts of the children of God. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God." "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another . . . if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us" (John iv:7, 11–12). The divine nature bestowed by the Spirit of God is a holy nature and a nature which possesseth in it the love of God. Love is therefore the divine nature in its manifestation. And this wonderful love, the divine love, is to be manifested in the body of Christ. It is the true motive for all ministry. The Corinthians in their worldly, self-seeking, ambitious spirit, in their use of the gifts, had not followed this more excellent way. The divisions among them and

*W. Kelly.

their self-exaltation and self-confidence were the result of not being governed by love. If love had been supreme in the Corinthian church, neither sectarianism, nor careless walk, nor indifference to sin of others and toleration of evil, nor going before a heathen judge, nor high-minded pretensions, nor the desecration of the Lord's supper, nor a false practise of Christian liberty, could have prospered. Love surpasses everything. It is a far better thing than any gift. Very significantly the Apostle begins with the gift, as already pointed out, of the smallest value. Speaking with the tongues of men and of angels without love is like sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*

Prophecy, the understanding of all mysteries, all knowledge, all wonder-working faith and even the giving up of all things and martyrdom, are valueless without love. God looks for love; it is of God, and loving is conformity to God. It is a solemn warning that true gifts may be possessed without a manifestation of love.

Many pages could be filled with a closer examination of the different characteristics of divine love as given by the Apostle. If we study the blessed life the Son of God lived down here we shall find how He manifested this love in His life among the children of men. The fifteen brief, but deep, descriptions of love should be the standing mirror of self-judgment for all God's children. To read these pithy sentences in His presence at the close of each day and apply them as a test, is a wholesome exercise.

The opening descriptions are all of a passive character, and show that love demands the renunciation of self. Long-suffering and kindness head the list. These are the attri-

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*For a number of years movements have started which claim to be a new Pentecost. The gift of tongues is the leading feature. They go by different names—Apostolic Faith—Pentecostal Faith—Latter-Day Rain, etc. But is it the work of the Holy Spirit? The divisions which exist in these movements, the unscriptural teachings which are held by some of them and the lack of love, besides other characteristics are not the marks of the energy and power of God's Spirit.

butes of our loving God and Father, and we are to imitate Him as His children and forbear one another in love. Love does not envy. God does not envy. Envy is of Satan; all self-seeking has its origin in pride, which is the crime of the devil (1 Tim. iii:6). Love vaunteth not itself. It never seeks the applause of men. Self-display is self-love. True love is not puffed up. Love doth not behave itself unseemly. Its ornaments are meekness, modesty and unobtrusiveness. It seeketh not its own; it is self-neglect and is expressed in devotion to others. Nor is it easily provoked, for self-consciousness and self-seeking being absent, sensitiveness becomes impossible. Love thinketh no evil. The better translation is, "does not impute evil." It rather hides than exposes. Furthermore, love "rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth with the truth." The last four characteristics show its positive energy. It beareth all things —it puts up with anything but that which is wrong and sinful; believeth all things; it does not suspect, therefore it hopeth all things and also endureth all things. Finally the permanence of love is stated. Prophecies, tongues and knowledge will fail, cease and pass away. Love never. It is abiding eternal, the greatest of all.

4. Prophecy and Speaking with a Tongue.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. Prophecy the better gift. 1–13.
2. Intelligibility demanded. 14–25.
3. Practical instructions for the public use of these gifts. 26–40.

It is evident from the contents of this chapter that the Corinthians had unduly magnified the gift of speaking in a strange tongue. It had a spectacular aspect which they enjoyed. He therefore shows them that the gift of prophecy is more to be coveted than speaking in an unknown tongue. The speaking in an unknown tongue is intelligible to God, but he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation and comfort. While the Apostle does not deny the value of speaking with tongues, he would rather that they prophesied "for greater is he that proph-

esieth than he that speaketh with tongues." Speaking with tongues edifies the speaker alone but prophecy edifies the church. What is the profit in speaking with an unknown tongue to believers unless the tongue has a real meaning. Musical instruments, which give forth sound, like a pipe or an harp, have no meaning whatever unless there be distinction in the tunes. Thus he shows the uselessness of the gift of tongues for edification unless the tongue is intelligible to all. "Even so ye, for as much as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret."

What the speaking in tongues really was we do not know positively. It was probably an ecstatic form of speech, or some foreign language. As a distinctive gift it has passed away, notwithstanding the fact that from time to time the restoration of this sign-gift has been claimed.* But what is prophesying? In the Old Testament prophecy, it was foretelling coming events. In the New Testament, it has a different meaning. It is not foretelling, but forthtelling. It is one who is speaking as from God and for God; the one who possesses this gift must therefore be in communication with God through the Spirit so as to be able to communicate to others His mind and His will. The exercise of this gift necessitates a close walk with God. This gift the Apostle desired the Corinthians to have. Instead the Corinthians had the inferior gift, which they valued on account of the display and perhaps the mysteriousness of it.†

The Apostle also states that he spoke with tongues more than they did. "Yet in the church I had rather speak five

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*During the middle ages; at the time of the Wesley's; during the days of Edward Irving, when it was proven to emanate from evil spirits; and in our own days, thousands claim to possess it.

†The people in our own times who profess to have received this sign-gift claim that it is an evidence of having received the "baptism" of the Spirit, which, as we have already pointed out, is in itself unscriptural. They are on ground on which they are open to the subtle influences of Satan's power.

words with understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." From all these regulations and statements we learn that the use of this gift was rather tolerated than commended (see verse 39) to the churches because it was a hindrance rather than a help to the needed thing, which is edification in love. Furthermore, tongues were for a sign to the unbelievers. Prophesying is for the believers. "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place and all speak with tongues and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad?" It is a fact that in the meetings of the modern advocates of the gift of tongues often the greatest disorder prevails. Men and women falling down in convulsions, hysterical laughter, unpleasant shrieks and other demonstrations have not been uncommon, so that an unbeliever would be perfectly right to pass the verdict "they are mad." It is different with prophesying. "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or are unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, declaring that God is truly among you."

The meetings of the Saints of God coming together in His Name and gathered to that name must be characterized by quietness and order. "For God is not the author of confusion (tumult, unquietness), but of peace, as in all churches of the Saints." All things must be done decently and in order (verse 40). Another important instruction is given in verses 34–35. "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is shame for women to speak in the church." Some have said that this demand of the Apostle was given solely to the Corinthians, because women were forward in the church and that it does not apply to our days. This is a serious mistake. Nor are these words merely the words of the Apostle Paul, as some have

claimed. It is God's Word and the command is the command of the Holy Spirit. The public ministry of women is not permitted by the Spirit of God. The Word of God discountenances a prominent public ministry of women as inconsistent with the original law of creation, and with the modesty and meekness which are the woman's chief adorning in the sight of God. What mischief, confusion and worse things have resulted from disobeying this divine command. Woman leaving the sphere assigned to her by the Creator and the Redeemer is stepping on dangerous ground. In connection with the statement, "A woman suffer not to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence," the Apostle calls attention to the fact "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in transgression" (1 Tim. ii:12–13). The originators and leaders of the most damnable heresies of the latter times such as Christian Science, Theosophy and Spiritism are women.* But woman has a ministry and can exercise her gifts as a member of the body of Christ.

"The woman's sphere of liberty, and, one may say, sovereignty, is at home; that is to say, it is private and not public. It must not be thought that this does not give ample scope for the exercise of gifts of whatever kind. If there were only more of the cultivation on the woman's part of that which belongs really to her sphere, how fruitful would be the exercise of the gift with which God has endowed her and how many places would be open to her which men, by reason of their being men, could not in the same way fill! This in relation to children, it is at once evident; with the younger children, the woman is still the best and the nature-ordained teacher. God has placed the babe in its mother's arms and not its father's; and this does not mean that the woman's sphere is only in her own family.

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*Again we call attention to the modern gift of tongues, the Pentecostal movements. Women are prominent among them. The divine command "let your women keep silence in the churches" is disregarded by them, while they claim obedience to the Word and a return to apostolic faith and practice.

There are countless families to which her sex will introduce her, and where she may find herself fully at home and abundant profit and recompense of her work. So, through the wives, women have access in this way to an indefinite sphere of occupation for varied blessing. The wife is the heart-centre of the household, and the ability thus to reach the wife in a way that woman certainly can do far beyond others is an immense privilege and responsibility entrusted to her. Would that there were more realization of this!"*

*Numerical Bible.

III. RESURRECTION AND THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH. CONCLUSION. Chapters xv–xvi.

1. Resurrection and the Hope of the Church.

CHAPTER XV.

1. The Gospel and the Resurrection of Christ. 1–11.
2. If Christ were not raised—then what? 12–19.
3. Christ the First fruits and what follows. 20–28.
4. Further practical arguments about Resurrection. 29–34.
5. Concerning the Resurrection of the Body. 35–49.
6. The Coming of the Lord and the Victory. 50–58.

The third section lifts us higher and brings us to the summit of this Epistle. We have seen the church in relation to the world, the church as the body of Christ and now we see the consummation, the destiny of the church in resurrection glory. From this chapter we learn that some members of the Corinthian church said "there is no resurrection of the dead" (verse 12). The denial of this fundamental doctrine of the faith brought forth this blessed portion of the Epistle concerning resurrection and the coming of the Lord.

The first thing mentioned in opening up this subject is the gospel which Paul had preached to the Corinthians, which they had received and wherein they stood. This is the order: The preaching of the Gospel, the good news, its reception by faith, followed by the standing in salvation and the enjoyment of it. By this Gospel is salvation as it is so fully revealed in the Epistle to the Romans. The Apostle Paul had delivered unto them, which he himself had received from the Lord (Gal. i:11–12). The three great facts according to the Scriptures (the Old Testament Scriptures) are: (1) Christ died for our sins. The death of Christ, the cross and the mighty work accomplished there, is the great foundation. The entire Old Testament revealed in many ways this fundamental fact without which there would be and could be no redemption. (2) He was buried. He expired as to the body on the cross. The death of Christ was real and

not a deception. And His burial also has a meaning in the Gospel (Romans vi:4). And the third great fact of the gospel, "He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." This is the great truth of this chapter, a truth, if denied, must result in the complete collapse of the gospel. And His resurrection had been foretold by Himself as well as by the Scriptures. (See Genesis xxii:4 and Hebrews xi:17–19; Psalm xvi). This great truth, the enemy has always hated. The lying inventions of the Jews are well known to every reader of the Gospel (Matt. xxviii:11–15). In Corinth this truth was being denied, and in our own days those who deny the physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus are ever on the increase in the professing church. They occupy leading pulpits and are prominent in institutions of learning.

The Apostle brings forth a number of witnesses, but he does not mention the women who play such an important part in the resurrection account of the Gospel. He gives only a number of witnesses, all men, who furnish an unanswerable evidence. Unbelievers have often attempted to trace the belief in the resurrection of our Lord to the women. Cephas is mentioned first. "But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter," had been the angelic instruction on the resurrection morning. And Peter who had so shamefully denied Him had seen the risen One. "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon" (Luke xxiv:34). On the day of Pentecost he became the wonderful witness of the risen Christ. That He appeared first to Simon Peter shows His infinite grace. Then He was seen of the twelve. Luke xxiv:36–48 speaks of the eleven; the twelfth had gone to his awful place. But the passage in Luke also informs us that others were with them when the Lord appeared. The eleven were gathered together, and those that were with them. (Luke xxiv:33). Probably Matthias, the one added to the apostolate (Acts i:26), was in that company. "After that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto the present, but some are fallen asleep." This was probably

in Galilee. And how could such a large number of men be deceived together, or concoct a falsehood? It is an impossibility. Sooner or later, if they had all agreed to deceive the world, the fraud would have been discovered. He was also seen by James and by all the Apostles. Last of all he was seen by the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus, where as the blind persecuter of the church, the chief of sinners, He beheld Him in the glory light. He was like one born out of due season. He was an untimely birth. He was in his experience a type of the nation to which he belonged. As he saw Christ in glory so will the remnant of Israel behold Him at the time of His second coming. He was therefore a firstfruit of the nation.* The Apostle Paul is one of the greatest witnesses to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The argument which follows (verses 12–19) is so clear and powerful that no comment is needed. If Christ is not risen from the dead, if it were true what some said in Corinth "there is no resurrection of the dead"—then what? The answer is fearful, for it strips the Christian of everything. "Your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins; your loved ones who died in Christ are perished, gone forever; we are of all men most miserable." And into this terrible pit the men who deny this fundamental doctrine are leading those who accept this damnable heresy (2 Peter ii:1).

But triumphant is the uncontrovertible fact, "Christ is risen from among the dead"; and more than that, "He is become the firstfruit of them that slept." As He was raised, not as we have it in the authorized version "from the dead," but "from among the dead," so will there be in the future an "out-resurrection from among the dead," which is the first resurrection of all those who are Christ's. A general

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*The correct meaning of the Greek word "ektroma" seems to point to a child born from a dead mother, by what is called the Caesarian operation. The dead Jewish system gave birth to the chosen vessel who was to become what Israel should have been, and yet will be, when the mystery of the present dispensation is complete. (Rom. xi:25–27).

resurrection is no more taught in the Bible than a general judgment. By man came death (the first Adam) by man also is the resurrection of the dead (by the last Adam, Christ). Verse 22 does not teach a universal salvation. Those who will be made alive are those who are "in Christ." But only such are in Christ, who have believed on Him and were born again. Verses 20–28, unfold the successive stages in the accomplishment of God's purposes. (1) The Resurrection of Christ, then after the purpose of the present age is accomplished—(2) His second coming (verse 23). (3) The Resurrection of those who belong to Him. (4) The overthrow of all His enemies and the establishment of His kingly and glorious rule over the earth. (5) His delivering up the Kingdom to God that God may be all in all.

Verses 29–34 continues the reasoning on the fatal results if there were no resurrection. Verse 29 connects with verse 19 and what is between, verses 20–28, form a parenthesis. What then is the value of Christian suffering, self-denial, trial and persecution if there were no resurrection? This connection with the previous argument helps us to understand the much disputed statement "else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" It is said that some thirty different interpretations of this statement are in existence, most of them so fanciful and strained that they merit no further mention. Some say it meant those who were about to be baptized and others believe it has a meaning concerning those who had relatives who had died unbaptized. There is no need of inventing these theories. If we look at it in the most simple way the difficulty disappears. They had been baptized and taken the place as being dead with Christ. In this sense they had been baptized for the dead. But if the dead rise not then this ordinance, which is so closely connected in a symbolical way with death and resurrection, has no meaning and value at all.

"Baptized, then, for the dead is to become a Christian with the view fixed on those who have fallen asleep in

Christ, and particularly as being slain for Him, taking one's portion with the dead, yea, with the dead Christ; it is the very meaning of baptism (Rom. vi). How senseless if they do not rise! As in 1 Thessalonians iv, the subject, while speaking of all Christians, is looked at in the same way. The word translated '*for*' is frequently used in these epistles for 'in view of,' 'with reference to.' "*

Then those who had been affected by these doubts about resurrection asked questions concerning the resurrection of the body and the process of resurrection. How are the dead raised? And with what body do they come? But he brands as folly their doubting reasonings. There are of course, difficulties for reason but none for faith. If God's omnipotant power is admitted and believed every difficulty vanishes. Their difficulties and objections were not of faith. Nature and God's works give abundant evidence of the resurrection of the body. There will be in resurrection a continuity of identity.

"They sowed but bare grain, whether wheat or any other, but they knew quite well that that grain was not to continue grain, but that it would soon be clothed with a body very different from that which it had when sown in the earth. God gave it the body that He had willed for it, and to every seed its own kind of body. Thus, the individuality of what was sown was maintained all through, spite of disorganization. God in it, as in innumerable cases in nature, has stamped things everywhere with His own stamp of resurrection. Things are in His hand. You may call the process natural because you are so familiar with it, because it is so constantly taking place under your eyes. All the same, God is working in it and through it.

"And what advantage would it have, if there were no resurrection, by dying daily, denying self, passing through all kinds of trials, suffering persecution and fighting, as Paul had done at Ephesus, with wild beasts? If there

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*Synopsis.

were no resurrection, then man is like the beast: let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. That which looks so merely lifeless has, nevertheless, in itself the determination of its future life. No seed produces anything else, but its own kind, and yet how different is that which springs out of it from the seed out of which it springs"!*

True from all this we learn that the resurrection of the same body is promised and while its identity is preserved it will be a different body at the same time. So then is the resurrection of the dead.† It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. What kind of a body will it be, this spiritual body? Scripture gives the answer. "Who shall change our body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii:21). We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.

Now our blessed Lord was not raised from the dead with an ethereal, airy body. His was a real human body of flesh and bones. He ate in the presence of His disciples; He was able to take food, though He needed none. He was capable of passing through closed doors and was in nowise limited by earthly conditions, such as space. And even so will be the spiritual body of the risen believers. Not a spirit-phantom, but a spiritual body in its adaptation to the spirit. As we have now a natural body which is suited for an earth-life, so the believer shall have a body suited for a glory-life. We shall be like Him to be with Him in eternal glory and in these wonderful bodies we shall rule and reign with Him.

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit

*Numerical Bible.

†All through this resurrection chapter only the resurrection of believers is in view. Nothing is said about the resurrection of the wicked dead. They too will be raised as to the body to exist forever in the dreadful condition of eternal punishment.

incorruption" (verse 50). It simply means that man as he is here below cannot inherit God's kingdom. It does not mean the kingdom which will some day be established on earth in which converted Israel and converted nations will be the subjects. It means the kingdom of God on the other side of death. The kingdom on earth for a thousand years will be an earthly thing; the kingdom mentioned in this verse is the kingdom of God in glory.

"The blood applies to the present life. It is the vehicle of change. It is that which implies the need of continual sustenance and renewal. A body which needs no renewal cannot need blood to renew it, and thus the Lord speaks of Himself as risen from the dead, not as having flesh and blood, but as having flesh and bones. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones," He says, "as ye see Me have." He has poured out His blood and left it with the earthly life that He had lived. He has entered upon a new sphere, retaining all that makes Him truly man, but not the conditions of the old earthly life. The conditions are changed. Flesh and blood are not suited for the kingdom of God in this sense of it. He is not, of course, in the least implying that there is any evil in flesh and blood."

And what a change it will be for God's redeemed people to receive these wonderful bodies of glory and enter into the kingdom of God in glory! And when will it come? Paul writes of a mystery.* We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall be changed. It will be a sudden thing. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. It will be at the last trump. This trumpet has nothing whatever to do with the seventh trumpet in Revelation. Before any trumpet has

*The teachers who say that there is no such thing as a Coming of the Lord for His Saints may well pause at this word "mystery." They teach that this coming here, when the dead shall be raised and living believers shall be changed, is the visible Coming of Christ at the end of the great tribulation. But this visible Coming is the revelation which is found in the entire Old Testament prophetic Word. It was and is not a mystery. But the Coming of the Lord for His Saints, who are to be caught up in clouds to meet Him in the air, is a *new* revelation, unknown in former ages.

sounded, before the Lamb of God, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, opens the seals, He comes for His Saints "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." The trumpet is a military term. The first trumpet bade the armies to arise and be ready; the last trumpet commanded them to depart, it was the signal to march. When that shout (1 Thess. iv:13–18) comes from the air and He comes for His Saints, the dead (the dead in Christ, only those who believed) will be raised incorruptible. And "*we* shall be changed." The Apostle did not write "*they*" shall be changed. He expected not death, but the blessed Hope for himself and the Corinthians was the change in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, which means translation and not death. He speaks of the dead when he writes "for this corruption must put on incorruption." He speaks of living believers in these words: "this mortal must put on immortality." This gives the true meaning of Romans viii:11. The coming of the Lord is the Hope of the church. And then we have the shout of victory. And what manner of lives we should live and what manner of service should be ours in view of such a destiny, such glory, which in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, may burst upon us! "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord."

2. Exhortations and Conclusion.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. Concerning Collections.
2. Ministry.
3. Greetings.

First, in concluding this Epistle, he writes them about collections for the Saints. The same directions, he had given to the assemblies in Galatia. The collection for the Saints was to be taken on the first day of the week in connection with the remembrance of Him who had said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive." He did not want to have any collections when he came, His presence might have

influenced them in some way and he wanted to avoid this. How different is the collection-system in the professing church of to-day! No unsaved person should be permitted to give anything for the Lord's work; only the Saints can give acceptably. It is an unscriptural thing to go to the world, which lieth in the wicked one, and ask support and help from the unregenerated. God's blessing cannot rest upon this.*

Then he writes of his plans. He was tarrying in Ephesus until Pentecost. A great and effectual door had been opened unto him and there were many adversaries. It is still so. Whenever the Lord opens a door and His Spirit works we may well expect the opposition of the adversary. But may we also remember His gracious promise to those who are in Philadelphian condition of Soul (Rev. iii:7). If we have a little strength, if we keep His Word and do not deny His Name, He will still open doors and no power can shut them. He will keep the door of service open as long as it pleases Him.

Solemn is the final statement after the greetings. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema Maranatha. The words "Anathema Maranatha" mean "Accursed—Our Lord cometh." And accursed will be any man who has rejected the Love and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It shows that some in the Corinthian assembly may have been mere professing Christians without ever having tasted the love of Christ. Then the final word "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus."

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*Other unscriptural methods are those which raise funds by entertainments, suppers, etc., and then the appeals which are often made by Evangelists and others, the influences which are used to obtain the largest results! All this is condemned by the simple and brief instruction about collections in this chapter.

SECOND CORINTHIANS

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The Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

Introduction.

This second epistle is inseparably connected with the first Paul had written to the Corinthians. Its authorship is undoubted, for no other epistle bears such distinctive marks of the author and brings out all which characterized him as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. From critical sides it is claimed that between the first and second epistles, there must have been another letter of the Apostle, more severe in tone than the first epistle. This letter the critics maintain was lost. This supposition is mostly founded on chapter ii:3–4 and chapter vii:8. The statements made by the apostle in these passages, it is argued, cannot be explained by the message of the first epistle and the situation described is altogether too strong to have been created by the first epistle. But there is no need to invent an intermediate letter to explain the tone and burden of this second epistle. The first epistle contains sufficient material to produce the effects in the Corinthians and also in the mind and heart of the apostle of which he writes in the above passages. 1 Cor. iv:18–21; v:1–8; vi:5–8; xi:17–22 and xv:35–36, account fully for the great Apostle's solicitude and emotions.

How the Second Epistle Originated.

After the first epistle had been written and delivered to the Corinthians, Paul seemed to have been greatly troubled in his mind about how the church in Corinth would receive and treat his inspired communication. The first epistle had been written with many tears and deep soul-exercise. He knew that it would make them sorry, yet he was in doubt and unrest about it all. Titus had evidently been sent by the Apostle to Corinth to ascertain the truth about this matter and to find out what effect the first epistle had upon the Corinthians. Others think that Timotheus had first returned from Corinth and had brought very painful news, which greatly increased the anxiety of Paul and he sent, therefore, another letter through Titus to the Corinthians (the letter which is claimed was lost). However, this is only a conjecture.

At the time of writing this epistle, Paul had left the province Asia (2 Cor. i:8) where he had been in some great peril. In leaving Asia he had come by Troas, where the Lord had opened a door for him to preach the Gospel (2 Cor. ii:12). In Troas he fully expected to meet Titus and receive the much longed for report from the Corinthian Church. "I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother" (ii:13). He therefore sailed to Macedonia. It was in Mace-

donia where Titus met him and told Paul about his visit to Corinth. "For when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more" (2 Cor. viii:5-7). The tidings which Titus brought were in the main good tidings. They had mourned over the wrong which the first letter had pointed out and they had repented; however, it is also clear that not all had been settled. There were still his enemies who attacked him and they became evidently more bitter against him on account of the strong letter he had written to the church. He wrote therefore, this second epistle in which he expresses the comfort which the news of their repentance had brought him, but in which he also very strongly defends his personal character and his apostolic authority.

This establishes beyond controversy the fact that the epistle was written in Macedonia. The exact place can hardly be ascertained. The note at the end of the epistle "written from Philippi" is simply traditional. It is more likely that he spent some time in Thessalonica. The time when this second epistle was written must have been the early autumn of 57, A. D.

The Contents and Characteristics.

That in many ways there is a vast difference in the two epistles to the Corinthians cannot escape even a superficial reader. The second epistle is a far more personal one than the first and there is less doctrinal matter mentioned. One of the leading characteristics is the rapid transitions, which emanated not from the moods of the great man of God, but from the deep exercises of his soul. Anxiety, indignation, resentment, trust and love are linked together in rapid succession. A critic begins his remarks on this epistle with the following words "Of all Paul's epistles this is the most obscure. It is a veritable cloudland." But another writer expresses the value of this Epistle in a true way, when he says "What an admirable epistle is the second to the Corinthians! How full of affections! He joys and is sorry; he grieves and he glories: never was there such care of a flock expressed, save by the great Shepherd, who first shed tears over Jerusalem and afterward blood." Dean Alford remarks on this grand document. "In no other epistle are matter and style so various, and so rapidly shifting from one character to another. Consolation and rebuke, gentleness and severity, earnestness and irony, succeed one another at very short intervals and without notice." Still another gives a good summary of the contents of this epistle.

"Personal experience, and this used for the help of others in their trials; the work of the Lord in all its varieties, with the action of the Holy Ghost answering to it; the truth of God in its distinctive shape and highest forms, or the glory of Christ contrasted with the spirit, in former days hidden under the letter; the walk and service which befit such revelations of grace; the affections called into action by all this in the midst of sorrow and suffering, with evil abounding and grace much more abounding; the trials and wants of saints, calling out the loving remembrance of others; the opposition of self-seeking men, employed of the enemy to hinder the blessing of saints and to lower the glory of Christ, to distract the weak and give scope for unscrupulous activity; but on the other hand the energy of the Holy Ghost working not only to vouchsafe heavenly visions, and so give faith its object, but to manifest Christ in weakness and suffering where the power of Christ may rest, are all brought out with remarkable force and fulness."

The Apostle's Self-Defence.

While the epistle to the Galatians is the defence of the doctrine of the Gospel against false teachers, the second epistle to the Corinthians is the defence of his own personal character, his apostolic authority, his motives and his ministry. His adversaries, judaizing teachers and others, who were continuing the sectarian spirit, had charged him with many things, slandering his character and belittling his apostolic authority and efficiency. What they had spoken against him we learn from the epistle itself. They depreciated his person. "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible" (x:10). "Though I be rude in speech (as they had accused him) yet not in knowledge" (xi:6). The reason why he speaks in this epistle so much of his self-sacrifice, his zeal, his sincerity, his manly courage, his untiring service and his many sufferings, is, because he had been attacked and belittled in all these things. It is well known that Paul means "little." Saul had been changed to Paul, the little one. Unlike his namesake in the Old Testament, King Saul, whom Samuel had rebuked, with the words "when thou wast little in thine own eyes," the great Apostle was little and remained little in his own estimation, the mark of every true servant of Christ. He called himself "less than the least of all saints" (Ephes. iv:8). Yet in this epistle he is forced to boast in order to vindicate his character and ministry. In chapter xii:11 we read "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me; for I ought to have been commanded of you; for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostle, though I be nothing." Thirty-one times he speaks of glorying or boasting and that because he was compelled to do so. In this way we learn of some new things which happened in the life of the Apostle

Paul which are unrecorded elsewhere. These are: his escape from Damascus in a basket (xi:32–33); his great experience in being caught up to the third heaven (xii:1–4); his thorn in the flesh (xii:7, etc.); his remarkable sufferings and privations (xi:23–27). The fact that these experiences were not mentioned by him till he was compelled to do so and to show that, if he wanted to boast in something, he had abundant reasons for doing so, manifests his great humility.

True Ministry.

The epistle is a wonderful mine in spiritual and practical truths. The one great truth which may be traced throughout the entire epistle is the ministry in the body of Christ, the church. And the apostle himself in making his self-defence is a pattern of what true ministry in the body of Christ is and what it means. Here are blessed, spiritual lessons and principles which apply to God's true children at all times. All who desire to be devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ in these days, need these practical truths. May it please God to lead us into them and enable us by His grace to walk in His truth.

The Division of Second Corinthians.

We divide this epistle into three parts, which is the most satisfactory division.

I. **TRUE MINISTRY AS MANIFESTED IN THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE APOSTLE.** Chapter i–vii.

1. **The Introduction.** Chapter i:1–7.
2. **Paul's Experience and Explanations.** Chapter i:8–24.
3. **His Deep Exercise Concerning Them.** Chapter ii.
4. **The Ministry of the New Covenant as Contrasted with the Old.** Chapter iii.
5. **The Character of the True Ministry.** Chapter iv.
6. **Concerning the Future; The Ministry of Reconciliation.** Chapter v.
7. **Ministry in Connection with Testings and Trials.** Chapter vi:1–11.
8. **The Apostle's Appeals and Rejoicing.** Chapter vi:13–vii.

II. **THE MINISTRY OF GIVING.** Chapters viii–ix.

1. **The Examples and Principles of Giving.** Chapter viii.
2. **Exhortation and Encouragement.** Chapter ix.

III. **THE APOSTLE'S SELF-DEFENCE AND VINDICATION.** Chapters x–xiii.

1. **The Defence of His Authority.** Chapter x.
2. **Answering His Adversaries. His Boasting.** Chapter xi.
3. **Revelations in which He Might Glory. The Marks of His Apostleship.** Chapter xii.
4. **Still Absent, Yet Coming. The Conclusion.** Chapter xiii.

Analysis and Annotations.

I. TRUE MINISTRY AS MANIFESTED IN THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE APOSTLE.

Chapters i–vii.

1. The Introduction.

CHAPTER I:1–7.

1. The Salutation. 1–2.
2. The Thanksgiving. 3–7.

After the opening words of salutation, the Apostle blesses God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. The Apostle had many trials and testings, as well as much suffering, and in all these depressing experiences, God had graciously ministered unto him. Therefore he blessed God in this outburst of praise. We can only bless God as we know Him. Trials, afflictions, sorrows and sufferings make God a greater reality to the believer and display His gracious favor towards His beloved people. The Apostle had made this experience, "Who comforteth (or encourageth) us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." In all his distress and tribulation he had drawn near to God, and God had not failed him, but ministered to his need. The blessing and encouragement he had received from God fitted him to comfort those who are in trouble. An important principle concerning true ministry in the body of Christ is made known in these words of thanksgiving. God must minister to our hearts first, and, through what we receive, we can minister to others. And so all true ministry is of Him. He knew the sufferings of Christ in an abundant measure, but while the sufferings of Christ abounded toward him, so did his consolation abound through Christ also. All he passed through

and suffered as a devoted servant of Christ in an antagonistic world, were the sufferings of Christ. Of these sufferings he speaks more fully elsewhere in this Epistle. And both, the trouble and the comfort, were not exclusively for him, but for all Christians likewise. All was for their benefit and blessing. The Apostle states, that whether afflicted or comforted, it is for their consolation and salvation, and that the same result is wrought in them by their own participation in a like experience. The Lord in His gracious dealing would turn affliction to their blessing as well as the consolation. His heart had been encouraged by what he had heard from Titus about their godly sorrow and therefore he could express his confidence "and our hope of you is stedfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so are ye also of the consolation."

2. Paul's Experience and Explanations.

CHAPTER I:8–24.

1. His Experience. 8–14.
2. His Explanations. 15–24.

The Apostle speaks, first of all, of the trouble he had when he was pressed out of measure,* in so much that he despaired of his life. What experience did he mean? The question cannot be positively answered. It may have been the trouble in Ephesus (Acts xix) to which he refers in 1 Cor. xv:32, "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts in Ephesus." Others think that it was some severe attack of sickness or a powerful assault upon his life from some other source. Whatever it was, he had been in such a peril that he almost lost his life. "But we had the sentence of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death and doth deliver; in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us." It was all permitted to come upon him for his own good. He learned by it

*Or "weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power."

his own utter helplessness; it destroyed in him all self-reliance; he had to cast himself upon God, whose power and faithfulness as a deliverer were blessedly manifested in this experience. It showed him his nothingness and God's power in deliverance. Every true believer will welcome any affliction or tribulation which produces such precious results. In the tenth verse, he groups together the fact of God's deliverance past, present and future. "Who delivered us from so great a death." This undoubtedly refers to the danger he was exposed to and out of which He had been delivered, but it may also be applied in a more general way. We are as believers delivered from so great a death, that is, eternal death. Then there is a present deliverance "who doth deliver." These are the trials and testings in the way, in which the believer learns anew that He is the God of our salvation. "Salvation through a work wrought already for eternity is the daily lesson of a growing faith. Sickness, privation and trouble of any kind are, with outward persecution, permitted as occasions of sustaining and delivering love. Grace knows how to deliver even from those snares in which our own folly or carelessness may have entangled our feet."* And the Apostle expressed his confidence in a future deliverance. He who has delivered His people, saved them by Grace, who constantly delivers and keeps, will do so in the future till the final great deliverance comes and all His redeemed people will be gathered home.

But while the Apostle trusted in God for all this, as all true believers do, he also recognized the value of the prayers of others. God's children can be fellow-helpers in prayer for the servants of God "helping together by prayer for us." Prayer is therefore a very important part of true ministry in the body of Christ. And what had been bestowed upon him, would lead many to praise God in giving thanks on his behalf. He was rejoicing† in the testimony of his own

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*Pridham.

†The word rejoicing is "glorying" or "boasting." As mentioned in the introduction this word is found thirty-one times in this epistle.

conscience, that in holiness* and sincerity before God he had acted in the world and more abundantly towards them. Only partly had they recognized him. He mentions "the day of our Lord Jesus." In that day the Corinthian saints would be the Apostle's glorying, and the Apostle was their glorying. The day of the Lord Jesus is not the Old Testament day of God. The day of the Lord will bring the visible manifestation of the Lord in great power and glory. Judgment for this earth follows as well as mercy in bringing righteousness, peace and the Kingdom. The day of the Lord Jesus is for the Saints of God and is celebrated not on earth but in glory. Often the Apostle refers to that blessed coming day when the Saints shall be gathered home. As a doctrine it is impressed continually on the memory of the church, while as a moral power it is a constant endeavor of the Spirit to bring it to bear directly on the daily walk of the believer, both as a regulator of conscience, an argument of patience, and an efficient stimulant of all true spiritual affection (Rom. xiii:12–13; 1 Pet. i:7; 1 John iii: 1–3).

His explanations follow. He intended to come to them long before this. His plan was to pass by them into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto them, so that they might bring him on his way toward Judea. He had not done so. They might accuse him therefore of having failed. The word "lightness" in verse 17 means fickleness. Was he fickle-minded? Was it merely the lightness and fickleness, a changing yea, yea, followed by nay, nay? He had stayed away from Corinth for other reasons; it was to spare them that he did not go there. Therefore, it was not fickleness on his part at all.

He did not purpose according to the flesh. What he earnestly desired was from love for them, and all his plans were under the guidance of the Lord. "But as God is true, our word toward you is not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and

*Not "simplicity" as in the authorized version.

nay, but in Him is yea. For whatever may be the promises of God, in Him is the yea, wherefore also through Him is the amen, unto the glory of God through us." They had been suspicious of him and his motives, and now after having denied the false charge of being fickle-minded he reminds them of his preaching among them which was not yea and nay. He turns from the accusations against him, to what he had preached. The positive doctrines of the Gospel had moulded his character and controlled all his motives. He and his companions, Silvanus and Timotheus, had preached among them the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and the blessed truths of salvation and redemption which centre in Him and flow forth from His Person. And the preaching of the Son of God has no doubt and uncertainty in it; it is the declaration of positive and final Truth. Men doubt and are fickle-minded about the Person of Christ and the Gospel in our days, but God's Word speaks in positive terms, which do not permit any uncertainty whatever. It is a wonderfully deep statement that all the promises of God, whatever they may be, are in Christ—in Him is the yea and through Him the amen likewise. All promises are made to Christ and are in Him and those who trust in Christ share them in Him. All came by Him, all is in Him, all will be accomplished through Him. "Whatever promises there had been on God's part, the yea was in Him, and the amen in Him. God has established—deposited, so to speak—the fulfilment of all His promises in the Person of Christ. Life, glory, righteousness, pardon, the gift of the Spirit, all is in Him: it is in Him that all is true—yea and amen. We cannot have the effect of any promise whatsoever apart from Him. But this is not all: we, believers, are the objects of these counsels of God. They are to the glory of God by us."*

But how can we participate in it, if all is in Christ? Here is the blessed answer. God Himself establishes the believer in Christ, in whom all the promises subsist, so that the true Christian securely possesses in Him all that is promised.

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*Synopsis.

We have it all through God in Christ and can enjoy it in Him. And furthermore, God hath anointed us. We possess in Christ the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are sealed by that Spirit; God has put His seal upon us. And finally the Spirit also is in us the earnest of that which we shall possess with Christ in the coming day of His glory. "In whom ye also, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also believing, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of an inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory" (Eph. i:13–14).

3. His Deep Exercise Concerning Them. Yet Overcoming.

CHAPTER II.

1. The Burden of his Soul. 1–4.
2. Concerning the Brother who had been Disciplined. 5–11.
3. Overcoming. 12–17.

In the previous chapter we read the reason why he had not gone to Corinth. "To spare you I came not to Corinth" (verse 23). He feared, that on account of their deplorable condition; exercising his God-given apostolic authority, he might appear as dominating over them. He had determined that he would not come again to them with sorrow. He might have hastened to Corinth with a rod (1 Cor. iv:21), but he exercised patience and had waited, no doubt with much prayer to God, for the gracious effect of the first Epistle he had sent unto them. In all these statements so humble, so loving and so patient, we have the love exemplified which is described in the previous epistle (Chapter xiii). He was not easily provoked; he hoped all things and endured all things. He also tells them in what state of mind he was in when he wrote his first Epistle. What deep soul exercise the fourth verse reveals! He was so much concerned that he wrote out of much affliction and agony of heart, while his tears flowed freely. But it was not done to grieve them; love for them was the only motive, "that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly towards you."

The case of the transgressor whose wicked deed had been exposed and rebuked in the first Epistle (1 Cor. v), whose discipline had been demanded by the Apostle, is taken up first. What had grieved him had grieved them also. This they had shown by the way in which they had treated this brother. Titus had brought him the information that they had acted and the transgressor had been put away from fellowship. He also must have told Paul of his deep and true repentance. He therefore exhorts them to receive him again and comfort him, who was in grave danger of being swallowed up with much sorrow on account of the discipline from the side of the mass of Christians. He tells them to assure this weak brother, who had been restored, of their own love, and while they had forgiven him, he also forgave. In assuring the disciplined brother of their love they would thereby prove their obedience in all things. They had previously shown their obedience by judging the evil doer for his sin. "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices." The brother in question who had been delivered to Satan was in danger of being driven to despair, and in this way Satan might get an advantage over them. This might have resulted in bringing about a division between the Apostle and the Corinthians. The course pursued by the apostle in forgiving love, prevented this.

When the Apostle came to Troas to preach the Gospel of Christ, there was a door opened unto him by the Lord. His great business was to preach the Gospel, and the Lord had manifested His approval by opening a door. Yet Paul was restless. He had expected to meet Titus to receive the anxiously awaited news from Corinth. So he did not enter the door which the Lord opened to preach the Gospel, but he hastened to Macedonia. His own anxiety and restless haste were weaknesses. The door opened for service should have made him tarry at Troas to preach that Gospel, which he loved so well. Then, in due time, the Lord would have led Titus to him. From all this the Corinthians could learn his great love for them and his deep anxiety and concern. And

yet his conscience must have been troubled in having lost so great an opportunity to preach the Gospel. Surely he was in a very trying position as a servant of Christ. On the one hand he valued the Gospel and loved to preach it, and on the other hand was his burdened heart for the Saints of God. And therefore he comforts and encourages himself by an outburst of thanksgiving. He knows that God is in it all; not he himself leads, but God always leadeth him in triumph in Christ* "and maketh manifest the odor of His knowledge through us in every place." It is an allusion to a Roman triumphal procession after the victory. Captives were led in these processions, but the victors were the prominent figures. So Paul declares, "God always leadeth us in triumph in Christ." He gives us the victory. All his anxiety for the Corinthians ended in triumph. This was always so. In connection with a Roman triumph incense was burned upon every altar. These aromatics pervaded the whole procession. Through the apostle the sweet smell of His knowledge was spread about. But he also applies this to the Gospel. The two classes are mentioned by him, those who are being saved and those who are perishing. Let us also notice the beautiful thought that the preaching of the Gospel is a sweet incense of Christ unto God. Independent of the results of the preaching of the Gospel, whenever that precious name is preached, which is as ointment poured forth (Sol. Song i:2), it delights the heart of God and is a sweet savor unto Him. But as to men, to some it is a savor (or odor) of death unto death and to others a savor of life unto life.†

And who is sufficient for these things? What great issues the Gospel ministry involves and how great the responsibility! The question is answered in the next chapter. "Our sufficiency is of God" (iii:5). Upon Him the true minister of the Gospel is solely cast. And because Paul

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*"Causes us to triumph" is a faulty translation.

†In the Roman triumphal procession were captives to whom the burning incense was a token of death; to others it was a token of life.

had his sufficiency of God as well as those who were associated with him, he could say, "for we are not as the many, corrupting the Word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ." The word "corrupt" has the meaning of adulterating, trading. It has been strikingly translated "driving a traffic in the Word of God" and with this making merchandise of the Truth of God, the adulterating is closely connected. It began with apostolic days. How much worse is it in our times! Many who lay claim to the name of ministers of the Gospel are men-pleasers, covetous, aiming at their own popularity, seeking their own and not the things of Christ; and therefore they trade in these truths and handle the Word of God deceitfully as well as diluting it. A solemn description of a true servant of Christ is the concluding sentence of this chapter. He is of God, with a God-given message, and he speaks of God in the sight of God.

4. The Ministry of the New Covenant in Contrast with the Old.

CHAPTER III.

1. The Epistle of Christ. 1–3.
2. The True Sufficiency. 4–6.
3. The Old and New Ministry Contrasted. 7–11.
4. The Glory in the Face of Moses and the Glory in the Face of Christ. 12–18.

It was customary in the church to give letters of commendation (Acts xviii:27; Rom. xvi:1). Did the Apostle need, as some others, epistles of commendation to the Corinthians, or such letters from them? Probably his enemies, the Judaizing teachers, who upheld the law and its ordinances, demanded such letters. They may have said, he did not come from Jerusalem; who then is Paul? Why has he not letters of commendation? His answer is, "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living

God; not on tables of stone, but on fleshly tables of the heart." It is a most beautiful and tender statement. The Corinthians were his letter of commendation, the proof of his blessed ministry, because under his preaching they had been saved and were walking well. After their obedience, he could rightly say so. It would have been impossible for him to make such a statement in the first epistle. Let all men read you as an epistle, and they will know what kind of a man I am. What confidence and love this expresses! It would also lead them to an earnest inquiry if they were really such a letter of commendation. When he speaks of "ye are the epistle of Christ" he describes the general character of the church and her responsibility. The church is the representative of Christ, or Christ's letter of commendation to the world. What a solemn responsibility to recommend in life and walk Christ to the world! Just as God had written once the law on tables of stone exclusively for Israel, so now the Spirit of the living God writes Christ on the hearts of believers, that the world may read Christ in the Church composed of all believers.* And this is true ministry, witnessing to Christ not alone in the proclamation of the Gospel, but in life and walk. "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the children of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. ii:15). And such was Paul's confidence through Christ to Godward. He trusted the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to accomplish this. In himself, he acknowledges, there is no sufficiency for anything, "all our sufficiency is of God, who also made

*"Ex. xxxiv:1; John xiii:35; xvii:21. The analogy is obvious. Jehovah was 'the God of Israel,' Christ is 'the Saviour of the world.' The tables were Jehovah's witness to His people, the Church is Christ's living Epistle to the world. Israel heard but turned away; the world saw and read but refused, and yet refuses Him who thus speaks from heaven. Lastly, in the former case, the law was made void by the commandments of men; in the latter, the Church, the power of whose testimony consists in her separation from the world, has by mingling with it become the betrayer, rather than the witness of the name by which she is called."

us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, not of letter, but of spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The latter statement is often wrongly interpreted. The word "letter" does not mean the entire written Word of God. Many have taken this view and declare that the Bible must not be taken literally, just as it says.* It is not the question at all between the literal words and meaning of the Scriptures and the spiritual meaning, but it is a contrast between the old covenant and the new covenant, between the law and the gospel. The word "letter" stands for the law, which in its ministration kills and cannot give life. What the purpose of the law is and what it can do and cannot do is learned from the following passages: Rom. iii:20, v:20, vii:5–11, viii:3; Gal. iii:10, 19.

By the law no flesh can be justified; by the law the offence abounded; the law means death to man (Rom. vii:10–11). It is weak and has no power to help man, and it curses man. In this sense the letter, the law, killeth. But the spirit giveth life. It means that the spirit of the Gospel is different from the law, for the Holy Spirit operates through the Gospel and quickens the sinner who is dead and under the curse. Here then we have the absolute incompatibility of law and gospel. The epistle to the Galatians makes this fact fully known. The contrast between law and gospel, the old and the new covenant, is introduced in this epistle because the teachers who magnified the law and preached the keeping of the law for righteousness, were also at work in Corinth (chapter xi:22). And the glory of the gospel and its ministry cannot be fully demonstrated except in its relation to the law. The contrast made is fivefold:

Law	Gospel
Letter.	Spirit.
Ministration of death.	Ministration of the Spirit (Life).
Ministration of condemnation.	Ministration of righteousness.
Vanishing glory.	Abiding glory.
Veiled glory.	Unveiled glory.

*This is mostly said in connection with Prophecy, the Second Coming of Christ, etc. More than once the word "the letter killeth" has been used to explain away the literal meaning of things to come.

The law ministers death. It was written and engraved and came with glory. This refers us to the second giving of the law. Glory was connected with that, for Moses' face shone. Because grace and mercy were mingled with the second giving of the law (Exodus xxxiv:1–7), glory was seen upon the face of Moses. They could not look upon that glory, and Moses, the Mediator, had to cover his face with a veil. It was a brightness which dazzled and repelled, but had no power to attract or to bring light, warmth and joy to the hearts of the people. But if glory was connected with the ministration which is death, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?

The Gospel is all-glorious and abiding; it is the ministration of righteousness which abounds in glory. The glory on the face of Moses has given way to the glory in another face, even in the face of the Lord, Jesus Christ. The glory on Moses' face was but the reflection of His glory who came and dwelt among men. It is now a remaining glory as well as a surpassing glory, "the glory that excelleth." And the sinner can behold that glory. "Righteousness is now ministered unto us, not worked out by us; and thus, indeed, the glory of God is revealed as nothing else could reveal it. His inmost heart is told out in righteousness, but love is righteousness, and love, how marvelous, as shown in the gift of Christ for men! So that which was made glorious in the time past had, in itself, no glory compared with this surpassing glory."*

"Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness† of speech." With such blessed assurance and knowledge of the ministration of righteousness and the Spirit, the true minister can use great plainness of speech in the proclamation of the Gospel. "To make the marvelous truth of God's gospel as clear as daylight to the human conscience is the first duty of those whom the Lord now sends forth as heralds of His grace. Whatever is recondite or

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*Numerical Bible.

†Literally: boldness and confidence.

enigmatic is not now of God. Babes receive that which, when digested, makes them men. It could not be thus with Moses, who was indeed the open minister of the law, but the veiled prophet of grace. The action of Moses in covering his face is here described as something intentional, and in keeping with his office as the minister of that which he knew to be imperfect in character, and therefore not of permanent effect. The lawgiver was a witness also of a better thing than law. To deliver his present message to the people he lifted the veil, which was again replaced when the commandment was uttered. Before God he was unveiled, and looked with open vision on the mystery of Jehovah's ways, but to Israel his covered face was an emblem of the incomplete and unsatisfying nature of the ministry committed to his charge."*

But Israel has been blinded. The people who boast in the ministration of the law did not believe, and as a result their minds were blinded (Isaiah vi:9, 10; Matthew xiii:14; John xii:40; Acts xxviii:26; Rom. xi:8). They read the Old Testament, but the veil is unremoved; yet the day of grace is coming when the veil shall be taken away, and that will be when they turn to the Lord during the coming time of great tribulation, ending with the glorious coming of Him whom they once rejected (Hosea v:15; vi:1–3).

And those who believe look upon the unveiled, the unhidden glories of the Lord, and are transformed into the same image from glory to glory. It is through faith. And all is through the blessed life-giving Spirit of Christ, who works in believers as the Epistle of Christ. "The power to enjoy Him is the power to reflect Him. The reflection is no effort, but the necessary effect of enjoyment." May we enjoy Christ by being more and more occupied with Him through His Word and then make Him known by walking even as He walked. This is a part of true ministry so much needed.

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*A. Pridham.

5. The Character of the True Ministry.

CHAPTER IV.

1. The Gospel of the Glory of Christ. 1–6.
2. The Treasure in Earthen Vessels; Weakness and Power. 7–12.
3. Resurrection and Coming Glory. 13–18.

This ministry which the apostle mentions is the ministry of the Gospel. And those who know it by having received mercy are to be the witnesses. Every Christian who has obtained mercy, who is saved by grace, is called to witness to this blessed fact in some way. "We faint not"—we are not discouraged, but encouraged to go on in its proclamation, knowing that it is a sweet savor unto God and the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. The hidden things of shame, the methods of the flesh, craftiness, the deceitful handling of the Word of God, were renounced by the apostle: he avoided those things. All carnal things, all artifices, human wisdom and rhetoric, by which men's minds might be captivated and their applause gained, were unknown to the apostle. His commendation to every man's conscience in the sight of God was by the manifestation of the truth. He had implicit confidence in God's Word and in the Gospel of the glory of Christ. This confidence is sadly lacking in our days among the professed preachers of the Word. As a result the methods of the flesh are used and the holy things are dragged down into the gutter. What abominable methods are used by professional "evangelists" to gain notoriety, secure large crowds and large collections! And the falsifying of the Word, the deceitful handling of the Scriptures, which go along with those methods! No wonder the world applauds such methods and the defence of the cross has ceased.

And the gospel is here called "the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." And this gospel shines in all its radiancy. In the first epistle we had a blessed definition of what the Gospel is (1 Cor. xv:1–4). There we read of His death for our sins, His burial and His resurrection. But here we are lifted higher; the Christ who died

and rose again is in heaven crowned with glory and honor. He is there at the right hand of God as our representative, and all the love, the grace and power which are for His people shine out in His blessed face. A glorified Christ in all His fulness and glory, is the gospel in its highest meaning. But if this gospel, which Paul calls "my gospel" is hid, that is, veiled, it is in those that are perishing. They are unbelieving, and unbelief puts them under Satan's power. He is called here the god of this age (the word world means age), that is our age. The age rejected Christ, and that has made Satan the god of the age, a title which he did not possess in the previous age. And he blinds the eyes of them that believe not. As they refuse to see the light which now shines in the gospel of the glory of Christ, they become blinded by the father of lies by various methods and means. He blinds the eyes by the age itself over which he domineers. He makes it appear as if this age is fast making for better things. Righteousness and peace are impossible during the present evil age; this age is one of darkness, ending in a complete manifestation of the mystery of iniquity in the person of Satan's man, the Antichrist. Righteousness and peace can only come through the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ and by His enthronement as King over this world. Satan hides the real character of this age and this is one of the ways by which he blinds the eyes of them that believe not. He leads man to exalt himself, and nourishes self-trust and self-exaltation.

But what is the message of the true servants of Christ? Do they exalt man, or themselves, or the age with its boasted progress? "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. Because it is God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, who hath shined in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." As it was in the hour of creation when darkness covered all, so it is in redemption. God hath shined in His grace into the hearts of them who believe. And He hath shined, in that, through us, the knowledge of the glory of God in the

face of Jesus Christ may shine forth to others. This unspeakable treasure and glory is in earthern vessels that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God and not of us. As the ancients kept the most valued treasures in earthen jars, so all those glorious things God has given in the gospel, as well as the ministry of it, are deposited in earthen vessels. The believer, with a body of humiliation, weak and frail, though no longer in the flesh, yet the flesh, the old nature, still in him, is the earthen vessel. The term reminds us of Gideon and his men with the torches in earthen pitchers (Judges vii:16–22). The pitchers had to be broken to pieces so that the light could shine, and thus in that dark night the victory was won. The old man has to be kept constantly in the place of death, self must be judged and broken to pieces, that the light may shine forth. This is a truth which is more than suggested by this statement, though the outward man in his weakness and frailty, subject to affliction and suffering in the world is principally in view.

Then follow statements which illustrate the earthen vessels in their weak and helpless condition, and the exceeding greatness of the power of God. The power is manifested through the earthen vessels in trial and affliction. The earthen vessels may be troubled, afflicted on every side, but the power keeps them from being straitened or distressed. Perplexed, persecuted, smitten down—such is the condition of the earthen vessels. But God's gracious power is manifested in all these earthly and trying circumstances.

"Always bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus (made like Him, in that the man as such was reduced to nothing), in order that the life of Jesus, which death could not touch, which has triumphed over death, should be manifested in his body, mortal as it was. The more the natural man was annihilated, the more was it evident that a power was there which was not of man. This was the principle, but it was morally realized in the heart by faith. As the Lord's servant, Paul realized in his heart the death of all that was human life, in order that the power might

be purely of God through Jesus risen. But besides this, God made him realize these things by the circumstances through which he had to pass; for, as living in this world, he was always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, in order that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his mortal flesh. Thus death wrought in the apostle; what was merely of man, of nature and natural life, disappeared, in order that life in Christ, developing itself in him on the part of God and by His power, should work in the Corinthians by his means. A thorough trial of the human heart, a glorious calling, for a man to be thus assimilated to Christ, to be the vessel of the power of His pure life, and by means of an entire self-renunciation, even that of life itself, to be morally like unto Jesus. What a position by grace! What a conformity to Christ."*

How little of all this is known experimentally in our easy-going days among God's people! In verse 12 we read, "So then death worketh in us, but life in you." Different explanations have been given of this statement. True ministry in self-denial and self-forgetfulness works death to the servant. His self-forgetting love brought him constantly hardships and suffering; he followed the Lord in all this and knew the fellowship of His sufferings. But through it the people of God were helped, comforted and blessed. In this sense life worked in them through the self-sacrifice of the apostle.

And what sustains in all this? It is faith. And faith reckons on God who raiseth the dead. "Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also with Jesus, and shall present us with you." The faith of the believer and the servant looks forward to the glorious consummation when Christ comes for His saints and the great presentation (Jude 24) takes place. This is the glorious goal when we shall no longer see in the glass darkly, when we shall know as we are known, when we shall see Him as He is and be like Him. Therefore, "we faint not; but if

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*Synopsis.

our outward man be consumed, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Faith always looks upon things seen as temporal. Unseen things, the things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, are eternal; with these faith is to be occupied. But who is able to say what awaits us there? Who is able to tell out the meaning of that wonderful sentence, "A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" There is a surpassing, an unspeakable, an indescribable, an unfathomable and eternal glory for the Saints of God. In ages to come God will display the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii:7).

6. Concerning the Future. The Ministry of Reconciliation.

CHAPTER V.

1. The Earthly and the Heavenly House. 1–8.
2. The Judgment Seat of Christ. 9–12.
3. The Constraint of Love. 13–16.
4. The Ministry of Reconciliation. 17–21.

The certainty of the future things is brought more fully in view. The apostle had given the great doctrines concerning the resurrection of the body, the coming of the Lord and the blessed hope in his first epistle (chapter xv). In the closing verses of the preceding chapter, he mentioned again the fact of the believer's resurrection and presentation in the presence of the Lord (verse 14) and spoke of the eternal things, the coming glory. And so he continues: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The earthly house of this tabernacle is the body of the believer, the earthen vessel in the previous chapter. It is called a tabernacle (a tent) because it is only the temporary lodging of those who are by grace but strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Yet in this earthen vessel, this frail tabernacle, there is a

divine indweller, the Holy Spirit. The apostle speaks of the dissolution of our earthly house, "if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved." He does not say "when we die," but only states the possibility that the tabernacle might be dissolved. The dissolution of the mortal body of the believer is not presented therefore by the apostle as a certainty, but only as a possibility. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" was the blessed mystery revealed through the apostle in his first epistle (1 Cor. xv:51). The change of the body of the believer is the certainty, but its dissolution is not. But if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved "we know we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." What do these terms mean? What is the building of God, the eternal house in the heavens? Some have identified it with the Father's house and its many mansions of which our Lord speaks. But this house of which the apostle writes cannot be heaven, the Father's house, for it is said to be from heaven and in the heavens. Others have invented a temporary body. They teach that when the believer dies he gets at once a kind of an ethereal body which he will possess between death and resurrection. This is a speculation contradicted by the word "eternal." Nowhere in the Word of God is it taught that the disembodied spirits of the redeemed are to be clothed with a body before resurrection takes place. The body of the believer in its present state is compared to a tabernacle; the building of God, the house not made with hands, refers to that which the believer shall possess in the future, no longer an earthly house, a tabernacle, but something permanent, of supernatural origin. It is quite evident that the apostle means by way of contrast the spiritual body (1 Cor. xv:44), which is in store for the believer. This fact is stated once more, but the purpose of these words is not to convey the thought that this house is to be possessed immediately after death: the emphasis is upon "we know" and "we have." The Spirit of God assures us of the certainty of it. Thus positively every child of God can speak.

"For in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." The groaning is not on account of infirmities, hardship, privations or unsatisfied desires. It is deeper than that. It is the longing for the promised glorified condition with which we shall be invested. "It is the groaning not of a disappointed sinner, nor of an undelivered saint, but of those who, assured of life and victory in Christ, feel the wretched contrast of the present with the glory of the future." If we, beloved fellow-believer, live close to God, enjoy the fellowship with His Son into which grace has called us, then even in the fairest scenes and in the most attractive earthly conditions, we shall know something of this groaning and longing to be clothed upon with that which is from above and which will fit us to be the vessels of the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory.*

"If so be that being clothed upon we shall not be found naked." This again is another warning corresponding to the one at the close of 1 Corinthians ix. All human beings will be clothed upon with a body, for there is a resurrection of the bodies of the just and the unjust. The wicked dead, standing before the great white throne, will be clothed upon, but, not having Christ, they will be found naked for their eternal shame. And so the apostle warned of the possibility that even among the Corinthians there may be some who, destitute of Christ, only professing to be Christ's, would then be found naked.

Then again the apostle speaks of the groaning in this tabernacle, the body of our humiliation. His desire is not to be unclothed, that is, unclothed in death, when the body is put into the grave; he desires to be clothed upon, to be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. For this the apostle groaned; and this is what we wait for and not for death. When the shout comes from the air and His voice

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*The knowledge that at any moment one may change the prison-garments of mortality, and as a chosen companion of the King of Kings be found in the likeness of the Lord of Life, must generate a longing for that moment to arrive. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

opens the graves of His saints, we who are alive and remain shall be changed (1 Thess. iv:13–18). No death then but mortality will be swallowed up of life. Then our mortal bodies will be quickened. And God has wrought us for this very thing; the evidence of it is the indwelling Spirit, who has made the body of the believer His temple. Then the apostle describes a twofold condition, "at home in the body (the tabernacle) we are absent from the Lord"; and "absent from the body, present with the Lord." The latter statement is a complete refutation of that evil doctrine called "soul-sleep," *i. e.*, an unconscious state between death and resurrection. The believer who dies goes into the presence of the Lord and is consciously present there, waiting with the redeemed of all ages, "to be clothed upon with the house from heaven."

Linked with all this blessed teaching is the judgment seat of Christ (verse 10). All, whether saints or sinners, will have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ; certainly not at the same time. There is no universal judgment, when the righteous and the unrighteous appear together before the judgment seat of Christ taught in the Bible. The Saints of God will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, when He has taken them from earth to glory, not at death, but when He comes with the shout in the air. But for His blood-bought people, who constitute His body, who will then be clothed with the house from heaven (the glorified body), there is no more judgment in the sense of condemnation. His own blessed lips have given us the assurance of this. (See John v:24—that blessed word!) Nevertheless, there is a judgment seat of Christ for believers. The word "appear" in verse 10 is "manifested". We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ. Our works and our ways as Christians will then be brought fully into view; all will be brought into the light. Nothing can be concealed, and the believer receives the things done in the body.

"But there is more than this. When the Christian is thus manifested, he is already glorified, and, perfectly like

Christ, has then no remains of the evil nature in which he sinned. And he now can look back at all the way God has led him in grace, helped, lifted up, kept from falling, not withdrawn His eyes from the righteous. He knows as he is known. What a tale of grace and mercy! If I look back now, my sins do not rest on my conscience; though I have horror of them, they are put away behind God's back. I am the righteousness of God in Christ, but what a sense of love and patience, and goodness and grace! How much more perfect then, when all is before me! Surely there is great gain as to light and love, in giving an account of ourselves to God; and not a trace remains of the evil in us. We are like Christ. If a person fears to have all out thus before God, I do not believe he is free in soul as to righteousness—being the righteousness of God in Christ, not fully in the light. And we have not to be judged for anything: Christ has put it all away."*

And thus the believer has no more fear of death, for he knows what awaits him; and the judgment seat of Christ has also no terror for him. But the words of the apostle apply equally to unbelievers. The occupant of the great white throne (Rev. xx) before which the wicked dead appear and will be manifested, is the Lord Jesus Christ. They will be judged according to their works and condemned to eternal darkness and conscious punishment. In view of this the apostle states, "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

And how can we persuade men to flee the wrath to come, unless we preach the Gospel to them? Beautifully linked with this is the constraining power of the love of Christ (verse 14). In his ministry, service, walk and everything else, the great apostle knew this mighty constraint of love. And the cross and its glorious work looms up before his vision, in view of that love manifested there. In Him who died and who liveth, we are called as well as equipped with power to live unto Him. In faith, as dead with Christ and

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*Synopsis.

risen with Him, we look to a risen and glorified Christ in whom we are a new creation, "old things have passed, behold all things are become new."

Having reconciled us unto Himself by Jesus Christ, He has also given to us the ministry of reconciliation. Having brought us into this blessed position through grace, He calls us to make it known to others and lead others to Him. What we have received we are to use in our ministry. And every reconciled one is called into this service to exercise the ministry of reconciliation and be a soul-winner. "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Him who knew no sin, He hath made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." This is the great message of the true minister, and all believers can be true ministers and proclaim the message in Christ's stead and point sinners to the cross, where He who knew no sin was made sin for us, where redemption full and free is offered to all.

7. The Example of the Apostle Paul; His Testings and Trials.

CHAPTER VI:1-13.

He beseeches the Corinthians as co-workers, in view of the ministry of reconciliation, not to receive this grace of God in vain. This is not a contradiction of the doctrine of the security of a true believer. The apostle evidently was uneasy about some of these Corinthian Christians and feared that some had not received the grace of God in their hearts. Their conduct led him to this questioning. If the grace of God comes to man it may be received in vain and lead not to the blessed results in quickening power and real salvation for which it is given. "The security of His children is unquestionable, not so much through their perseverance, as men say, but by His power through faith; but the Corinthians needed and received faithful entreaty, for their ways

were not such as became the gospel. They were compromising His glory, who had called them to the fellowship of His Son; and the apostle instead of comforting them with the blessed assurance of the close of Romans viii, would here exercise conscience as well as affection in presence of God's grace."*

Interesting is the quotation from Isaiah xlix. A careful examination of Isaiah xlix:4–8 is suggested. It is a prophecy concerning the Messiah. His rejection by Israel is there predicted, and the words of the eighth verse, quoted here, "I have heard thee in a time accepted and in the day of salvation I have succoured thee" are addressed to Christ, whom Israel rejected. God raised Him from the dead, and though Israel is not gathered, He becomes the power of salvation for the Gentiles. This is the meaning of "behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." "Now" means this present dispensation when salvation is offered to the Gentiles. But grace rejected, neglected or perverted, as it is the case in this age in which grace reigns through righteousness, will bring judgment, followed by the blessings for Israel and the earth.

The apostle speaks once more of himself and describes negatively and positively the moral features which he manifested in his life as a true minister of God. He knew nothing of inconsistency in life, which is so detrimental to the ministry of the Word. "Giving no offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed." Well has it been said, "Christianity is real and living, not dogmatic only, still less official, else it becomes of all things the most contemptible." The apostle's life in every detail was a comment on his ministry. He practiced what he preached. The opposite undermines any preaching or teaching. "But in everything commending ourselves as the ministers of God." There was more than the avoidance of offence; in anything, in all conditions and under all circumstances he behaved himself as becomes the minister of God, the

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*W. Kelly.

ambassador of Christ. In much patience, never impatient, but always enduring in afflictions of various kinds when the world and the god of this age pressed him hard; in necessities and straits, when there seemed to be no escape. Then there were sufferings: in stripes, in prisons, in tumults. Of these we read more in chapter xii. Then there are named things he took upon himself willingly and gladly as the minister of God, namely: labors, watchings and fastings. By these he manifested his devotedness. Well may we ponder over each as they are given in verses 6 and 7. Then follows a series of contrasts. By glory and dishonor. He experienced these opposite extremes, both among the Saints, and also in the world. He was shamefully entreated and also revered. He was beloved and honored by God's people and dishonored by the slandering tongue of false teachers. But throughout he proved himself as the minister of God. By evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true. "Woe unto you if all men speak well of you." If the servant of Christ follows Him, the world will hate him and brand him a deceiver as it was done with the Lord (Matt. xxvii:63). It would take many pages to follow the paradoxes as given by this model and master servant. Nothing more beautiful and attractive than verse 10, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things." Oh, blessed life! May God's grace and God's Spirit enable us to manifest Christ as this servant of Christ did.

8. The Apostle's Exhortations and Rejoicings.

CHAPTER VI:14–VII.

1. His Exhortations. vi:14–vii:1.
2. His Rejoicing and Confidence. vii:2–16.

The first exhortation is to separation from evil, without which no true fellowship with God can be enjoyed. It is one of the most important exhortations in the Pauline epistles, and greatly needed in our days of laxity and world-

liness among Christians. God calls His people to holiness. "But as He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." He has separated us from the world which lieth in the wicked one and separated us in Christ to Himself. Believers are not of the world as He is not of the world (John xvii:14). The cross of Christ makes us dead to the world and the world dead unto us (Gal. vi:14). Furthermore God's Word tells us not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world (1 John ii:15), and "that the friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James iv:4). And the world is that great system over which Satan domineers, built up and developed by him, to give the natural man a sphere of enjoyment. True faith not only joins the believer to the Lord, but also separates him in heart and practice from the world which crucified the Lord and still rejects Him.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" is often quoted as a probibition of a mixed marriage. This is no doubt included, but the exhortation means more and includes every form of alliance with the world and ungodly principles. It also includes the so-called "religious world" with its unscriptural practices and denials of the truth. The apostle shows that the believer going along with unbelievers and the world, is indeed in an unequal, a strange, yoke. What fellowship can there be between righteousness and unrighteousness? What fellowship hath light with darkness? Each has a different head; Christ is over His people, they belong to Him; Belial is the head of those who believe not. What could there be for a believer to enjoy with an unbeliever? And believers are the temple of God. How then is association with idols possible? "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Blessed statement! But God's presence demands holiness, separation from evil. Fellowship with evil shuts out God in His gracious manifestations.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing."

"God must have His own holy, for He is holy; and this not only in an inward way, without which all would be hypocrisy, but in outward ways also to His own glory, unless He would be a partner with us to His own dishonor. He will have us clear from associations which are worldly and defiling; He will exercise our souls in order to free them from all that denies or despises His will. He commands those that believe to come out from those that believe not, and to be separated. Indeed the union of the two is so monstrous that it never could be defended for a moment by a true heart. It is only when selfish interests or strong prejudices work, that men gradually accustom and harden themselves to disobedience so flagrant and in every way disastrous. For as the man of the world cannot rise to the level of Christ to be together with His own, the Christian must descend to the level of the world. God is thus and ever more and more put to shame in what claims to be His house, with a loudness proportioned to its departure from His Word."*

And in connection with this exhortation to separation from unbelievers the Lord declares His relationship to us. Interesting is the use of the name Lord Almighty in verse 18. "And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." In the Greek the definite article before "Lord" is missing. It is simply "*Kyrios*," Lord. It is the same as "Jehovah." By that name He revealed Himself to Israel. To Abraham he spoke as the *El Shaddai*, the Almighty. The Lord who revealed Himself to Abraham, called Him to separation, "Get thee out from thy country." To Israel God spoke as Jehovah and they became His people, separated by Him and to Him. And the same Jehovah-Shaddai declares now a new relationship, He will be a Father and we His sons and daughters. In Christ we know God as our Father; "we are all the sons of God by faith in Jesus

*W. Kelly.

Christ." But to enjoy this relationship practically is only possible if the believer walks in separation. Real communion with God as Father without separating from evil is an impossibility.

"God will not have worldlings in relation with Himself as sons and daughters; they have not entered into this position with regard to Him. Nor will He recognize those who remain identified with the world, as having this position; for the world has rejected His Son, and the friendship of the world is enmity against God, and he who is the friend of the world is the enemy of God. It is not being His child in a practical sense. God says, therefore, "Come out from among them, and be separate, and ye shall be to me for sons and daughters."*

May we heed these important truths. God cannot compromise His own holy and righteous character. His demands upon His people are the demands of separation. And, as we are obedient, we enjoy in faith the blessed relationship into which His grace has brought us.

The second exhortation is closely linked with this. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Holiness in our walk is God's demand. God looks for practical holiness in His people. If we walk thus, habitually cleansing ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit, we perfect holiness, a practical, daily separation, in the fear of God. While we are, as born again, "clean every whit" (John xiii:10), our calling is equally to purify ourselves as He is pure. The defilements of the flesh are the things mentioned in Col. iii:5, Gal. v:19, and elsewhere. What are the defilements of the spirit? It means the license of the natural mind, the whole sphere of thought and will, when unregulated by the truth and fear of God. Read Chapter x:5. Every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

The words which follow tell us again of the affectionate

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*Synopsis.

concern which the apostle had for the Corinthians! How he loved them and how considerate he was. His whole soul yearned for them. He had wronged no one, nor had he corrupted any, nor did he make personal gain through them. He was filled with comfort. He had fightings without and fears within, but now all was changed. He had met Titus in Macedonia, and through his report and the encouraging news he brought from Corinth, God had comforted him. He knew his former letter (the first epistle) had grieved them, but it had worked for them the godly sorrow which was the aim of the messages sent to them through his inspired pen. "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance, for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that in nothing ye might be injured by us." But he also states that for a moment at least he regretted that he had written his first epistle of rebuke (verse 8). But was not that letter inspired? The power behind his pen was the Holy Spirit, yet he regretted for a time that he had written. How is this to be understood? It shows the difference between the individuality of the apostle and divine inspiration.

His heart was filled with so much love, that it obscured his spiritual discernment and he forgot for a moment the character of his epistle, that not he was responsible for what he had written, but that the Spirit of God was the author. The regret was an evidence of weakness at the time when no tidings reached him from Corinth and when his loving heart was so burdened for the Corinthians.* And what he writes now is a loving apology and great joy over what the epistle had wrought, an earnestness to clear themselves of the reproach, indignation on account of sin permitted, yea, zeal for God, and what revenge (or vengeance—righteous wrath)! And so he rejoiced therefore that his confidence had been restored in them in all things.

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*The same weakness is manifested in his journey to Jersualem. He loved Jerusalem and Israel in such a way that he went there even against the solemn warnings given by the Holy Spirit.

II. THE MINISTRY OF GIVING.

Chapters viii–ix.

1. The Examples and Principles of Giving.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. The Grace of God Manifested in the Churches of Macedonia. 1–7.
2. The Great Example. 8.
3. The Advice, Principles and Administration. 9–24.

There is to be a practical ministry in giving, especially in remembering the poor of the flock. He is anxious now to lay this responsibility upon their hearts. In the first epistle he had written them that his glory was in giving the gospel gratuitously. He would not take anything from the Corinthians for himself, but he wants their gifts for others. He was making up a collection for the poor saints in Judea and Jerusalem; of this he writes to them. Thus Gentile believers were to show their appreciation for the blessing which they had received through the Jews, for salvation is of the Jews. We also see in this an illustration of the oneness of the body of Christ, how the members are to minister to each other. Great grace in this ministry had been bestowed upon and manifested by the churches in Macedonia. They were themselves stricken with great affliction. They were very poor, but their deep poverty did not stint their gifts; they joyfully gave and abounded in the riches of liberality. These poor, afflicted Macedonian saints had even prayed the apostle with much entreaty to receive the gift from their hands. And the secret of it was that they had given themselves first to the Lord. All else was the outflow of this self-surrender. In all this the apostle rejoiced greatly, and therefore he exhorts the Corinthians to abound in this grace also. But the greatest example, which should constrain to abundant giving is the Lord Jesus Himself. He was rich and became poor, even for such as the Corinthians were, "that through His pov-

erty ye might be rich."* What confidence the apostle had in the Corinthians that they would indeed abound in this grace. They had begun a year before not only to do, but to forward also. He urges them to act now in performing what they had begun. It depends upon the willing mind: without this giving has no value at all. But if there is the willing mind, one is accepted according to what he has, and not according to that he hath not.

And in all this ministration Paul exercised great caution, "avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us, providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." There is always danger of reproach in these matters. Messengers were chosen to travel with the apostle "with this grace (the collections) which is administered by us to the glory of the self-same Lord, and for a witness of your ready mind." The apostle knew the devices of the enemy and therefore watchfully guards against suspicion and mischievous insinuations. Alas! what havoc the filthy lucre, the love of money, covetousness, which is idolatry, has worked in the professing church, and what offences have been given by it to unbelievers.

2. Exhortation and Encouragement.

CHAPTER IX.

1. Further Exhortations to Liberality. 1–5.
2. The Blessings Connected with Giving. 6–15.

Again he exhorts them to liberality in giving. He knew their willing mind and had boasted of it to them in Macedonia and told them they were ready a year ago. This had stimulated many. He hoped that they would measure up to this report and fall not behind in this expectation "lest

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*"His Riches—Our Riches," by A. C. G., unfolds the three leading truths of this precious word. The eternal Riches of the Son of God; His deep poverty in our behalf, and His Riches in resurrection-glory.

our boasting should be in vain in this behalf." To encourage them in giving and carrying out what they had purposed, he speaks of the blessing: "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." There is, then, blessing according to faithfulness in this ministry; as any other faithful ministry is not forgotten of God. Giving must not be grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver. God Himself delights to give. In infinite love He gave His only begotten Son, and He delights in all who imitate Him in His ways. There is no compulsion in giving save the constraint of His love. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." Such a loving ministry is not an unremunerative service. He is able to make up to all who, out of love, minister to the needs of poor and suffering and afflicted brethren. The apostle shows that thanksgiving to God would be the result of their loving ministry in giving. Three causes are specified: 1. Their subjection to the gospel. 2. Their liberal gifts to the Saints of God. 3. "By their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you"—that thanksgiving and glory to God for the fervent and longing prayers of other Saints, who received their ministry.

This section ends with thanksgiving unto God, "for His unspeakable gift." There is no need to add what that gift is, for every saint knows, God's unspeakable gift is His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. THE APOSTLE'S SELF-DEFENCE AND VINDICATION.

Chapters x–xiii.

1. The Vindication of His Authority.

CHAPTER X.

The apostle now turns to vindicate the authority, which he had received from the Lord. This had been brought into question by the enemy. In doing this Satan aimed at three things: He attempted to discredit him as a true minister of God; he tried to damage the great truths the apostle preached, and he endeavored also to bring about a separation between the apostle and the Corinthians. Assuredly the great man of God was troubled and did not want to speak much of himself and his authority. But he was forced to do so in this epistle and also in the epistle to the Galatians, for the truth of God and the honor of the Lord were at stake. The defence of his apostolic authority stands in the foreground in Galatians; here he puts it at the close of his letter, for it was necessary to deal with other matters first, and to assure the Corinthians of his deep concern for them and thus pave the way for an answer to the accusations brought against him.

He begins by entreating them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. The three words "Now I, Paul," were to remind them of his own person. It was the Paul who had come amongst them to preach the gospel, and through his preaching wonderful results had been brought about. And now attacked and belittled among the same people, who, next to God, had to thank him for everything, he begins to entreat them and vindicate his authority and character. He states, "Who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you." These words make partly reference to his personal appearance, which was not of a character which appealed to the Corinthians, who admired

the athletic physique of the Greeks. Not alone was his outward form lowly, but he was equally so in his manner and conduct. From this we learn that his accusers, who tried to influence the Corinthians against him, had thrown contempt on his person and character. We shall find that he takes up repeatedly their false charges and insinuations, to meet and refute them. When he writes, "but being absent am bold toward you," he has in mind what his enemies had said about the epistle he had written them; they belittled his personal appearance and his character, and sneeringly said, he is bold when he is absent; he knows how to write strong letters when he is away, but otherwise he is a coward. He answers by saying, "But I beseech you that I may not be bold when I am present with the confidence with which I think to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walk according to the flesh." He beseeches them that he may not be obliged to use his authority as an apostle when among them, against those who had wronged him by their false charges. He had written in boldness, yet he could also act in boldness and with authority when he was present with them. They had accused him that he was walking on the same level with them, that is, "according to the flesh." This he repudiates by saying that he walks in flesh,* which is quite a different thing. He was a man like other men; but when it came to warfare, he waged no fleshly conflict. He acknowledges that he has no wisdom in himself; as to flesh he is powerless, he is cast upon God. How different from these false teachers, his accusers who walked in pride and boasted of wisdom and were governed by selfish motives. The weapons he used were not fleshly, but mighty through God; the weapons which the Holy Spirit supplies. And this spiritual warfare means "the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every

*Note in the Greek the word flesh is without the definite article; not "in *the* flesh," but "in flesh."

thought to the obedience of Christ." Well has it been said, "repression of the natural will, which is the seat and vehicle of Satan's machinations, is the true aim of spiritual warfare." Mere fleshly, independent "reasonings" and "imaginations" are inconsistent with a real subjection to God. The natural man thinks his own thoughts and follows his own imaginations, but not so the believer: he abandons his own thoughts and imaginations; he casts down all that exalteth itself against the true knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. The Corinthians had not done this; they walked in a carnal way and the enemy got an advantage over them. And so it is largely today among God's people.

After stating that he was ready to avenge all disobedience, in virtue of his apostolic authority, when their obedience was fulfilled, he asks, "Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?" This is what they had done. "For his letters," say they, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." But he answers that just what he was in his letters when not with them, so would he also be when he is present with them. He speaks of his authority given to him by the Lord for edification and not for their destruction; he wanted them to know that he was not terrifying them by his letters. He did not dare to do like others did, commending himself. Those who opposed him constantly measured themselves among themselves, and not in God's presence. He acted differently. "But we will not boast of things without measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you." He disavowed all connection and comparison with those whose glory was of themselves, and though he had greater gifts bestowed upon himself than others, yet he would not boast of it. The measure which God had given to him had reached unto the Corinthians, for they were the fruit of his labors. He did not boast of other men's labors, and hoped that with an increase of their faith there would also be an increase of his labors even to the regions

beyond. "But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." If there is any glorying it must be in Him, who is the only proper object. He must be glorified by the true minister; He must be praised and exalted, and not the instrument. Self-praise and self-commendation do not mean approval from the Lord, but the opposite. "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." Self-commendation, the love of human praise in some form, disguised or undisguised, are prominent characteristics with many who preach and teach a great deal of truth in our days of boasting. Happy is the servant who hides himself, whose aim is to please the Lord and who looks to Him for approval.

2. Answering His Adversaries. His Boastings.

CHAPTER XI.

1. The Danger Through False Teachers. 1–6.
2. Answering His Adversaries. 7–15.
3. His Boastings of Labors and Sufferings. 16–33.

Inasmuch as he did not want to boast, he tells the Corinthians to bear with him a little while he acts foolishly in speaking of himself. It had become necessary to do so in order to answer his adversaries, who were making havoc among the Corinthians, but he looks upon his vindication and boasting as nothing less than folly. He is about to do what he had exposed in others in the previous chapter (verse 12). He therefore asks their indulgence. What he did he asked them to look upon as being folly, but to remember that it was for their sakes. He was jealous over them, not with a jealousy which originated in the spirit of a natural emulation, but with godly jealousy. He had espoused them to one husband, so that he might present them a chaste virgin to Christ. The church is the bride of Christ. He as God's messenger by the preaching of the Gospel of Grace, and the acceptance of it by the Corinthians, had betrothed them as an assembly to the Lord. His jealous

desire was to present the Corinthian church to the bridegroom in the coming day. He had his grave fears that as the serpent had beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so their minds might also be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Eve was for Adam, and so the church is for Christ and for Him alone. Eve was deceived by listening to another voice. Even so the Corinthians were listening to other voices and their simple faith was being corrupted by false teachings. Behind it stood the same enemy who had deceived Eve. Was there another Christ, which these teachers preached, than the Christ he had preached? Or were they receiving another and a better Comforter, another Holy Spirit, than the One they had received in believing the Gospel Paul had preached unto them? Or, have these men brought you a better gospel? If such were the case, they could bear with it. But how could there be another Jesus, or a better Comforter or a better gospel? He was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles; though he had, for the gospel's sake, abstained from excellency of speech, yet in all things had he been manifest among them.

Evidently the great apostle searched his heart and life to discover the cause of the alienation of the Corinthians. Was the offence perhaps in taking nothing from them and preaching the gospel freely, without money? It was his boast that he took nothing from them, as the brethren in Macedonia had ministered to his needs. But his boast was that he had preached the gospel in Achaia gratuitously. But why? Because he loved them not? God was his witness that such was not the case. It was to take away from these false teachers the boasting of preaching for nothing, so that they could not say, we labor gratuitously while the apostle receives money for his services. And who were these teachers? The Holy Spirit now exposes the true character of these men. They were not apostles at all, but deceitful workers, who transformed themselves into the apostles of Christ. They were the instruments of that sinister being who was once an angel of light and whose most powerful tactic is to assume this character, to which he had lost

all claim by his fall. These false teachers posed as ministers of righteousness. They made high pretensions, yet denied the true righteousness of God. We see much of this in our own days, especially in systems like Christian Science and others.

From dealing with the deceivers, he turns now to those who had become ensnared by them (verse 16). Reluctantly he speaks of himself again. To boast of anything except the Lord was a foolish thing to Paul. "That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also." Inasmuch as they compelled him to glory (xii:11), he is therefore ready to show what reasons he had for boasting. These Judaizing teachers boasted much of being Hebrews, of the seed of Abraham. But so was Paul. They boasted of being ministers of Christ. And here the apostle marshals his wonderful proofs of how much he excels in his ministries and labor. What other one could say what he rightfully said of himself? "In labors exceedingly abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft." Then follows the remarkable record. If it had not been for these evil teachers who had invaded the Corinthian church, we would never have known of these experiences of the great man of God, for the historical record, the Book of Acts, does not give us a full account of his devotedness and trials. And most likely even this list is not complete.

"Troubles and dangers without, incessant anxieties within, a courage that quailed before no peril, a love for poor sinners and for the assembly that nothing chilled—these few lines sketch the picture of a life of such absolute devotedness that it touches the coldest heart; it makes us feel all our selfishness, and bend the knee before Him who was the living source of the blessed apostle's devotedness, before Him whose glory inspired it."*

And if he must needs glory, he would glory in his infirmi-

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*Synopsis.

ties, in his helplessness. Why should he mention the otherwise unrecorded incident of his escape from Damascus? It was an inglorious experience. There was nothing to glory in, for no miracle took place to preserve him, nor angelic interference. Anyone who gloried in himself would never have mentioned so humiliating an experience.

3. Revelation in which He Might Glory. The Marks of His Apostleship.

CHAPTER XII.

1. Caught up to the Third Heaven. 1–6.
2. The Thorn in the Flesh. 7–10.
3. The Marks of His Apostleship. 11–15.
4. His Continued Deep Concern. 16–21.

In the previous chapter the apostle gloried in that which in the eyes of man has no glory at all. From the ignominious experience of being let down in a basket he turns to another experience in which he was caught into the third heaven. "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord." Of these he undoubtedly had many, given to him by the Lord, to comfort and strengthen him. We would never have heard of this great spiritual experience he speaks of now, if he had not felt the need of boasting on account of the deceiving teachers among the Corinthians. He had kept it as a secret to himself for fourteen years; an evidence of his humility.* In telling us of this experience he does not speak of himself as the apostle, but "as a man in Christ." It was therefore not a distinction put upon him on account of his calling as an apostle. As a man in Christ, that is, a heavenly man, for such every believer is, he was taken

*What a contrast with a certain class of people in our own times who claim to have returned to apostolic faith and apostolic power. They also speak much of visions and revelations, but they constantly make them known, print them in tract form, etc. Often they think themselves more advanced in spiritual things than others and give sad evidences of being puffed up.

up in a marvellous, unaccountable way, into the heavenly sphere. "Paul was in a state neither intelligible to himself nor explicable to his brethren. Yet he knows well the man, and can attest the visions which he is unable to describe. It was himself, but in a condition equally distinct from nature and from ordinary spiritual experience. He had while in this state a faculty of perception independent of both bodily and mental organs." He was in this state, undefined by himself, caught up into the third heaven and being caught up into paradise, he heard unspeakable words, which it is not allowed to man to utter. The word "paradise" is found but three times in the New Testament. The Lord used it first in speaking to the dying thief (Luke xxiii:43) promising him that he would be with Him in that blessed place that very day. Once more our Lord uses this word, promising the overcomer to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God (Rev. ii:7). The passage here is the third in which this word is used. It is the wonderful place above in His glorious presence, and Paul, being caught up to that place, had a foretaste of the joys and blessings of the redeemed. But he does not tell us anything he saw, but only what he heard. And the words he heard were unspeakable; they were unutterable —he had not the ability nor the permission to make them known. Thus the apostle, to whom the great truth concerning the church and her heavenly destiny was especially committed, passed through this great experience. And all who are "in Christ," who constitute the body of Christ, will ultimately be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air and be forever with the Lord. Then we shall know the unspeakable words. Surely the heart burns within us when we think of such a destiny. And Paul saith, "Of such a one will I glory, but of myself will I not glory." It was of himself as in Christ he gloried; as he looked to himself as a man, the earthen vessel, he could not glory, save in his infirmities. But was there not danger of being exalted on account of this great experience? Linked with the revelation, is the thorn in the flesh. "And lest I should be

exalted above measure through this abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." There was danger of pride of heart after such a vision, and so the Lord permitted a messenger of Satan to buffet the apostle for his own good. Here we have one of the most interesting evidences, that the flesh, the proud, old nature, is still in the believer and not eradicated as some claim. He had perhaps the greatest experience a human being ever had, and yet, though he did not exalt himself, in view of the tendency of the old nature to lift itself up, there was given him this thorn in the flesh.* What was this thorn in the flesh? Numerous answers have been given to this question. It is evident that it was not something sinful as some suggested, but it must have been some affliction in his body, which made him contemptible in the eyes of others and in his preaching. The exact nature of this affliction in the flesh cannot be determined. And he had gone to the Lord with this thorn in his flesh. "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." And the answer came to him. The thorn was not taken away but something better he hears from his Lord." "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." The assurance of the sufficiency of divine grace was to comfort his heart in the affliction, and that the power of God needed his weakness for its display, was to encourage him as the servant of the Lord. He at once understood the divine message. It enabled him not only to bear with infirmities, reproaches, necessities, perse-

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*"Alas! what is man? But God is watchful; in His grace He provided for the danger of His poor servant. To have taken him up to a fourth heaven—so to speak—would only have increased the danger. There is no way of amending the flesh; the presence of God silences it. It will boast of it as soon as it is no longer there. To walk safely, it must be held in check, such as it is. We have to reckon it dead; but it often requires to be bridled, that the heart be not drawn away from God by its means, and that it may neither impede our walk nor spoil our testimony."—Synopsis.

cutions and distresses for Christ's sake, but to take pleasure in them, for he knew all these things were the things which enable God to manifest His power. He therefore gloried most gladly in infirmities.

They had compelled him to become a fool in glorying. It should have been different. Instead of his self-defence and vindication in writing all these things to them they should have commended him, for in nothing he was behind the very chiefest of the Apostles, yet he adds "though I be nothing." He speaks of the signs of an Apostle which were wrought among them by himself. What love and tenderness he manifests once more towards his weak and wavering Corinthian brethren! And still he has deep concern about them. "For I fear lest, perhaps when I come, I find you not such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not; lest there be strifes, emulations, wraths, contentions, back-bitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults; and lest when I come again, my God should humble me with regard to you, and that I shall bewail many who have sinned before, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed." What a Christ-like servant he was!

4. Still Absent—Yet Coming. The Conclusion.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. Being Absent; Expecting to Come. 1–10.
2. The Conclusion. 11–14.

He speaks in conclusion of his coming to them. "This third time I am coming to you." And when he comes again he will not spare them. He reminds them once more of their doubtings about Christ speaking in him and using him as an apostle. They themselves were proof of this. If it were that Christ had not spoken to them through him (by preaching the Gospel), then Christ also did not dwell in them. But if Christ really was in them then it was

an evidence that Christ had spoken by him. Notice that part of the third verse and the fourth verse are parenthetical. Leaving out the parenthetical words gives us the correct argument. "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me—examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your ownselves. Do ye not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" What he wished was their perfecting. Why had he written this second epistle? "I write these things being absent, but being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction." "Finally, brethren, rejoice."* And the believers' joy as well as glorying is in the Lord. "Be perfected; be of good comfort; be of one mind; be at peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

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*Not farewell, but rejoice.

GALATIANS

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The Epistle to the Galatians

Introduction.

This epistle was addressed to the churches in Galatia. The authorship of this document has never been doubted and it has been well stated that "whoever is prepared to deny the genuineness of this epistle, would pronounce on himself the sentence of incapacity to distinguish true from false." Like the Corinthian epistle this Galatian epistle has in every way the characteristic marks of the Apostle Paul.

Galatia was a prominent province of Asia Minor. The leading cities were Ancyra, Pessinus and Tavium. The inhabitants of Galatia were not Orientals, but Gauls or Celts. They had pillaged Delphi in the third century before Christ and had settled in the central parts of Asia Minor, which was then named Gallograecia or Galatia. Classical writers give a description of their character. "The infirmity of the Gauls is that they are fickle in their resolves and fond of change, and not to be trusted." The leading characteristic seems to have been fickleness, which is also prominent in the opening chapter of this epistle. The apostle was greatly surprised by it. "I marvel that ye are so quickly changing from him who called you in the power of the grace of Christ unto another Gospel." When the apostle had visited them for the first time, they had received him with open arms and had shown him much kindness. But when afterwards false teachers appeared amongst them, who preached another Gospel, they listened willingly to them and became cold and indifferent towards the Apostle Paul and the Gospel he had brought to them. They had received the Gospel and experienced its blessed power, but they were so unstable that they were about ready to give up the Gospel of Grace and to turn back to the weak and beggarly elements, to the law and its ordinances.

Paul had been in Galatia (Acts xvi:6). He had preached the Gospel in this province and God had blessed the preaching, so that many were saved and a number of churches were founded. From chapter iv:13, 14 in this epistle, we learn something additional. "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you, at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." It seems he was then troubled with the thorn in the flesh. They had received him as a messenger of God and sympathized with his affliction that if it had been possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to Paul (iv:15). From this statement some have concluded that Paul's affliction was the well-known oriental eye-disease, ophtalmia. Later he visited Galatia again and strengthened the disciples (Acts xviii:23).

The Work of Judaizing Teachers.

The men who had gone to the Galatian churches and disturbed them were Judaizing teachers. Their evil teaching consisted in a denial of the Gospel of Grace, so blessedly unfolded in the epistle to the Romans. They taught that a simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is not sufficient for salvation, that in order to be saved the keeping of the law is necessary and that a Christian must observe the precepts of the law of Moses. Circumcision was especially emphasized by them. They had been to Antioch and taught "except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved" (Acts xv:1). They had also constrained the Galatians to submit to circumcision (v:2; vi:12). In order to establish themselves, they tried to undermine the apostleship of Paul and they attacked his authority. Peter evidently was in their eyes the great apostle of authority and as Paul was independent of Peter in his ministry and apostleship, as he had not been sent by Peter, they belittled him. It seems as if the fable of an apostolic succession was invented by these perverters of the Gospel of Grace.

The Object of the Epistle.

The object of this epistle is the defence of the Gospel which Paul had received by the revelation of Jesus Christ. In order to do this successfully the apostle had first of all to defend his own apostolic authority. After he had done so he fully exposed the evil teachings by which the Galatians were being deceived and showed them the perniciousness of the doctrine to which they had listened. The work of Christ on the cross was at stake, "for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." The exposure is made by a number of contrasts between law and grace in which the apostle shows what the law could not do and what grace has done. The object of the epistle therefore is to defend the gospel, as he writes in the second chapter "that the truth of the gospel might continue with you;" to point out the seriousness of the false teaching which was, through Satan's power, bewitching them, and in warning them to lead them back upon the foundation of grace from which they had fallen.

The Practical Value and Importance.

From critical sides it has repeatedly been stated that the Epistle to the Galatians contains a controversy of the church in the first century which has no longer interest for us, as there is no danger of Christians becoming Jews. Who would think in the twentieth century of submitting to circumcision in order to be saved? Or who would keep the ordinances of the law and Jewish holidays to obtain righteousness? And so this epistle is looked upon by some as having little value for our times. But the opposite is true. The perverted gospel,

which is so severely condemned in this epistle, upon which the anathema is pronounced, is the very gospel which is almost universally preached and accepted in our days. Christendom is thoroughly leavened with the leaven of legalism. And even a little leaven of it leaveneth the whole lump (v:9). To begin with, ritualism, so prominent in Christendom, is Galatianism. In fact ritualism had its beginning in the Judaizing teachers, who mixed law and grace and taught that ordinances are necessary for salvation. Their fatal error was the principle that works are needed to justify a sinner before God and that blessings can only come through ordinances. And this is the error in ritualistic Christendom. These Judaizing teachers looked to man and human authority; they acknowledged Peter as the apostle of authority. Ritualism teaches human authority and believes in a succession which has its source in Peter. Ritualism in denying the gospel of grace and teaching the necessity of law-keeping ordinances, keeping of holidays, has become corrupt in doctrine and practice. The all-sufficiency of the work of Christ is no longer believed and Christ Himself is dishonored. Romanism is the great and powerful Galatian system. It is branded in Revelation as the great whore, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Protestantism also is leavened by this evil leaven of legalism. Works and ordinances are in many denominations looked upon as being necessary to obtain righteousness and blessings from God. There is hardly any denomination which is free from the Galatian error. It is often present in a very subtle form. Most prominent to-day is that evil doctrine which maintains that salvation is by character. They speak of Christ and believe in Christ helping man, but that salvation is by grace, and that an eternal and perfect salvation is the free gift of God bestowed upon the believing sinner, on account of the finished work on the cross, is denied. This also is a perverted gospel, which is exposed in this epistle. We shall point out more fully in the exposition of the text the different errors and phases of legalism. The epistle, in view of the present day drift away from the gospel of grace, is of great importance. This great defence of the gospel should be much studied and obeyed by all who stand for and love the faith delivered unto the Saints.

The time when the epistle was written and where it was written cannot be positively determined. It is probable that Paul wrote the epistle while he was at Ephesus (Acts xix) from autumn 54 till Pentecost 57. The subscription "written from Rome" is incorrect.

The Division of Galatians.

The Epistle consists of three parts. In the first part (chapters i and ii) the apostle defends his apostolic authority and that he was absolutely independent of those who were apostles before him. He shows how he became an apostle and traces his own experience. Then he speaks of his visit to Jerusalem and what took place there at that time. The gospel he preached had been acknowledged by James, Peter and John, a fact which these Judaizing teachers had kept from the Galatians. A third fact is brought by Paul to their attention. Peter had been made prominent by these false teachers; they made it appear as if all the authority was invested in Peter. Perhaps they spoke of him as almost perfect. But Paul shows that Peter had no authority whatever over him. Paul had rebuked him when he had done wrong and committed a most serious mistake.

The second part (chapters iii and iv) contains the defence of the truth of the gospel itself. The Holy Spirit leads deep into the blessed truths of Christianity, and by a number of vital contrasts between law and grace shows what the law cannot do and what grace has done. Not ordinances, the works of the law make a sinner righteous before God, but it is faith which justifies. Why the law was given and how the limit of the law is reached when faith has come, as well as the blessed fact that those who are of faith are sons and heirs of God, indwelt by the Spirit of sonship, is all unfolded in this section. Here we learn that the law cannot give righteousness and that the justified believer is no longer under the law. "We are no longer under the schoolmaster." The third part (chapters v and vi) shows how a believer who is justified by faith, no longer under the law, but under grace, should walk. It is the walk

in the Spirit and the manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit. The division of this epistle is therefore as follows:

I. **THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL CONCERNING HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY.** Chapters i–ii.

II. **CONTRASTS BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE.** Chapters iii–iv.

III. **THE WALK OF THE JUSTIFIED BELIEVER, AS NOT UNDER THE LAW BUT UNDER GRACE.** Chapters iv-v.

Analysis and Annotations.

I. THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL CONCERNING HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY AND THE GOSPEL.

CHAPTER I.

1. The Introduction. 1–5.
2. The Rebuke. 6–10.
3. Paul's Gospel Given by Revelation. 11–12.
4. How Paul became an Apostle Independent of Jerusalem. 13–24.

The introductory words of this Epistle are brief and of deep significance. He speaks of himself as an apostle not from men, nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father. His apostleship had been called in question and the gospel he preached branded as lacking authority. This opening statement of how Paul became an apostle is more fully developed in the main part of this chapter (verses 11–24). He did not receive his apostleship through any man; his authority was neither successional nor derived. The Judaizing teachers who had sown their evil seed among the Galatians, had spoken of Peter as the apostle with authority and probably demanded that he should be recognized as the ecclesiastical head. Inasmuch as Paul had not been constituted an apostle through Peter's authority, they said that he was no apostle at all. With their wrong doctrines about the law as a means to obtain righteousness, they evidently attempted to foster upon Christian ground an ecclesiastical authority, corresponding to the successional priesthood of the law covenant. What was begun by these false teachers has become the curse of Christianity, for any priestly assumption in the church is the corruption of Christian doctrine.

The Apostle Paul declares therefore that the source of his authority and his ministry was higher than man. He received his commission "through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from among the dead." On

the way to Damascus the risen Christ appeared to him in glory and made him an apostle. God the Father, who had raised His Son from the dead and gave Him glory (1 Peter i:21) also made Paul an apostle. To be one of the twelve apostles it was necessary to have been an eyewitness of His deeds and a listener to His words (Acts i:21). Matthias met this requirement and was therefore divinely chosen to fill the place of Judas. Some teach that Paul should have been put in the apostolate as the twelfth. But Paul could not have been one of the twelve apostles for he did not follow the Lord Jesus during the days of His earthly ministry. He did not know Christ after the flesh, but his acquaintance with Him began when he beheld Him in resurrection-glory. All his ministry, the gospel he preached, the glorious truths he taught, had their blessed source in the risen and exalted Christ. He therefore owned no other source, no other authority, but God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he mentions in these introductory words "all the brethren which are with me." This means that the brethren with him endorsed all he was about to write to the Galatians in his great, God-given defence of the gospel. None of them could have any sympathy whatever with the most serious errors, aiming at the very heart of true Christianity, to which the Galatians had been willing listeners.

Another important fact is that the epistle is not addressed "to the church in Galatia" but "to the churches." The Spirit of God in the Corinthian Epistles addressed the Corinthians as "the church of God, the sanctified in Christ, called Saints" (1 Cor. i:2). In spite of their carnal walk and their spiritual declension the church in Corinth is recognized as being the church of God and its members as Saints. In writing to the Galatians, who were relinquishing the essential truths of the gospel of grace, departing from it and going back to the law as a means of justification, the Spirit of God does not make use of these distinguishing terms. He does not recognize as the church of God those who fall away from grace. From this we may learn that doctrinal evil is even a more serious matter than moral evil. How

serious a thing a perverted gospel is we shall soon discover. "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to Whom be glory forever and ever, Amen." The great truth in these concluding introductory words the Galatians had forgotten. Righteousness cannot come by the law, to which the Galatians were turning again. Man destitute of all righteousness, helpless to obtain any kind of righteousness, is a lost and condemned sinner. But Christ came and gave Himself for our sins and to deliver us from this present evil age.

The words of introduction are followed by words of rebuke and painful surprise. The Apostle marvelled at their strange behaviour, that they were so quickly changing from him who had called them in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel. From his lips they had heard the glad tidings of the grace of Christ when they were serving idols (iv:8). And now suddenly they were abandoning the gospel which had brought them such blessing, peace and power, and had saved them from the degradation of idolatry. They were accepting a different gospel, which was not another. Though another gospel was preached unto them, it was no gospel at all, for there can be no other gospel. There is but one gospel and that is the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, the love-gift of God, who became incarnate in order to die for sinners and be the propitiation for our sins. He finished the great work on the cross, a work which has glorified God and which enables Him to be a just God and a justifier (Romans iii:26) of all them that believe in Jesus. And He who finished this work is at the right hand of God. Therefore God has not another gospel, nor can He tolerate the perversion of His gospel. This is what the false teachers among the Galatians were doing as Paul writes: "but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." They were perverting the gospel by teaching that the finished work of Christ was not sufficient for salvation, but that man must

add his works, keep the law, and become circumcised. It was a God-dishonoring denial of the completeness and perfection of the work of Christ. And this perversion of the gospel, and more than that, the setting aside of that gospel altogether, is the almost universal thing in Christendom in our times. We hear much of "salvation by character," which is Satan's invention. Ritualism which makes ordinances the necessary means of salvation is another perversion of the gospel of grace; and so is the teaching of Seventh Day Adventism. The phrase one hears so much, "God has done His part and we must do our part," is another phase of a perverted gospel. Man is a lost sinner, helpless and hopeless in himself; he can do nothing, for he is without strength (Rom. v:6). The doing is all on God's side; all the sinner can do is to accept what the grace of God in Christ offers to him. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii:8–9).

"But though we, or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any other gospel than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed (anathema). As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any other gospel than that ye did receive, let him be accursed." These are strong and solemn words. Some have suggested that Paul was carried away by his passion, when he heard that his authority had been impeached, and that he wrote unwisely. They forget that it was not Paul who penned these words but the Spirit of God. The anathema upon the perverters of the gospel of Christ is fully justified when we consider what is at stake. The perversion of the gospel touches the unspeakably blessed work of Christ on Calvary's cross. If in any way righteousness is through the law, by what man does, then Christ died in vain (ii:21). Behind every perversion of the gospel, be it Ritualism, Christian Science, Seventh-Day Keeping, the new theology and other systems, stands the enemy of the truth of God, who always aims at the Person and Work of Christ. God, and it is a solemn truth, can do nothing else than put His curse upon

those who reject, pervert and falsify the gospel of His Son. The ardent words of the apostle are very remarkable. The Holy Spirit has given us God's own testimony, that if an angel came to teach what the apostle had not taught, he would be anathema. It little mattered who he might be, if he contradicted the testimony of God. Paul well knew that he had received it from God Himself, and he who opposed or falsified it, opposed the authority of God, and the truth which He in His grace made known.

Let Christians take heed to the solemn words of the apostle. We possess them in this Epistle, as well as in others which he wrote. They are the touchstone for all teaching; and we need to study them in order to know if he who speaks, tells us the truth of God. So solemn was this point, so deeply was it felt by the apostle, that he again repeats what he had before said—that whoever should preach any other gospel than that which the Galatians had received from himself, should be anathema.*

Nor must we forget that a day is coming when the divine anathema pronounced here will be executed. God will surely not tolerate forever the rejection of His Son and the work He accomplished. The vengeance of God is in store for all who do not obey the gospel (2 Thess. i:8). The doom of an apostate Christendom is pre-written in God's Word; and the apostasy is the rejection and perversion of the gospel. Let God's people everywhere witness against the spurious gospel as positively and solemnly as the great servant of Christ did in these words.

In his testimony and service he was not a man-pleaser, "for if I were pleasing men, I should not be the servant of Christ." He did not seek the applause of men and of the world. If he accommodated himself to men, seeking to please them, he would not be Christ's servant. Characteristic of the preachers of a perverted gospel is that they are catering to the wishes of men. When sound doctrine is no longer endured, then after their own lusts do they heap

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*J. Nelson Darby.

to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Tim. iv:3). And Jude describes these "men-pleasers" as follows: "Their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (Jude xvi).

The words of rebuke are followed by an historical account of his ministry, how he received the gospel and how he became an apostle independent of Jerusalem. The gospel he preached was not according to man, by which he meant, that he had not received it from any man, nor had somebody taught it to him. He did not get his instructions from those who were apostles before him. He had received it all by the immediate revelation of Jesus Christ. It is then incorrect to speak of a "Pauline theology" and "Pauline gospel" as if his mind had somehow put it all together and constructed a gospel-scheme. No mind of man could have ever invented or discovered the marvellous truths of the gospel. It is supernatural in its revelation and in its power. He then traces his remarkable experience once more, what a religious, zealous, law-keeping Jew he was. And where did all his zeal, his law-keeping lead him? It made him a persecutor of the church of God.* On the road to Damascus the God who had separated him called him by His grace, and the Son of God in His glory was revealed to him as well as in him, so that He might preach Him to the Gentiles. And he did not confer with flesh and blood after his conversion, neither did he go to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before him. To go up to Jerusalem would have been for him a natural thing; to go back to the city where he had wrought such havoc as a persecutor and there to confess his guilt and testify of Christ, may have appealed to him as manly. But he did not confer with flesh and blood; he did not follow his own reasonings. And why should he go to Jerusalem to consult with the other apostles? Should he

*Legalism is harsh like the law which can only curse man. The great legalistic and ritualistic system, Rome, is the persecutor of the Saints of God. Wherever grace is denied and the legal principle is made prominent harshness and intolerance are the results, if not actual persecution.

go there to report to them of what had happened, ask their council and gain their sanction? All this was unnecessary for he had received his call and commission from the Lord, and there was no need to go and consult any man about it. His independence of Jerusalem and his dependence on the Lord as His servant is thereby established. Jerusalem did not make him an apostle; the Lord had done this. Instead of going to see the apostles and put himself under them he went under the Lord, into Arabia and returned again to Damascus. After three years he went up to Jerusalem to visit with Peter. What happened during that visit? The apostles did not meet in council to examine Paul about his experience and fitness to preach the gospel. He did not seek the sanction or authority of Jerusalem, but he abode there with Peter for only fifteen days, to become acquainted with him. The other apostles he did not see at all, not even the beloved disciple, save James, the Lord's brother. All this proves his claim "an apostle not from men, nor through man." Afterwards he went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, everywhere preaching and teaching his God-given gospel. The many churches of Judea did not know him by face, but heard that the erstwhile persecutor now preached the faith he once destroyed. He tells the Galatians how little he had to do with Peter and the other apostles. The false teachers had brought this against him and had challenged his authority as an apostle on account of not being linked with Peter. He fully avows all this and shows that his apostleship was entirely independent of Jerusalem and the twelve apostles. And here we have the character of true New Testament ministry. It is from the Lord, independent of man and human, ecclesiastical authority. Its message is the message of God.

CHAPTER II.

1. How Jerusalem had Confirmed the Gospel Paul Preached. 1–10.
2. Peter's Failure; Paul's Rebuke and Testimony. 11–21.

Fourteen years passed by before he ever saw Jerusalem again. What wonderful years of service these years were!

The great servant of Christ had preached the divine message in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The day of Christ will reveal the blessed results of these years. Acts xv must be read to see why Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem. The same false teachers had visited the great Gentile center, Antioch, and taught "except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Then Paul and Barnabas were appointed to go to Jerusalem to lay this question before the apostles and elders. Here the additional information is given that Paul went up by a direct revelation from God. It shows his dependence on the Lord. They also took Titus with them, who was a Gentile believer and not circumcised. He was acknowledged as in Christian fellowship and not compelled to be circumcised. This, in itself, was sufficient evidence that the apostles in Jerusalem did not sanction the teaching that circumcision is necessary for salvation. Paul communicated to the leaders in Jerusalem the Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles. He did so privately first, for there was grave danger of a division in the body of Christ which he wanted to avoid; he did this so that he might not run in vain. In all this he manifested a gracious spirit. But when the false brethren introduced their perverted gospel to bring him and his fellow-laborers into bondage, he did not yield to them for a moment, but contended earnestly for the faith "that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you." The result was the full confirmation of the Gospel Paul preached, by James, Cephas and John, who gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. The pillars of the church, as these three Apostles are called, recognized the fact that the gospel of the uncircumcision had been committed unto Paul, as the gospel to the circumcision was Peter's calling and ministry. Both apostleships were from God and depended upon His gift. Thus the Apostle Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles, to whom was also committed the truth concerning the church, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, one body with Christ as the Head.

"It is evident that these facts are of great importance in

the history of the church of God. How often have we not heard Peter spoken of as head of the church. That Peter, ardent and full of zeal, began the work at Jerusalem, the Lord working mightily by his means, is certain, we see it plainly in scripture. But he had nothing to do with the work carried on among the Gentiles. That work was done by Paul, who was sent by the Lord, Himself, and Paul entirely rejected the authority of Peter. For him, Peter was but a man; and he, sent by Christ, was independent of men. The church among the Gentiles is the fruit of Paul's, not of Peter's work· it owed its origin to Paul and to his labor, and in no way to Peter, whom Paul had to resist with all his strength, in order to keep the assemblies among the Gentiles free from the influence of that spirit which ruled Christians, who were the fruit of Peter's work. God maintained unity by His grace; had He not kept the church, it would have been divided into two parts, even in the days of the Apostles themselves."*

This confirmation of Paul and the gospel he preached was a complete answer to the false claims and accusations of the enemies of the apostle.

A more serious matter is next brought to our attention. It shows the failure of Peter and how he had compromised the truth of the gospel. This exposure was necessary, for the false teachers claimed for Peter a special place of authority as if he were the perfect apostle, whose words and actions were next to infallible. The perverted gospel which teaches law-keeping and ordinances as necessary means for salvation, puts up man as authority and looks to man and not to the risen and glorified Lord. The Judaistic claims of Peter's superiority was the starting point of the Romish system, which asserts that Peter occupied a place as the visible head of the church in Rome, and which has culminated in the wicked assumption that the popes are the infallible vice-regents of Christ on earth.

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*Darby, Epistle to the Galatians.

Peter had visited Antioch and Paul had to withstand him to the face, for he was blameworthy.

Coming to Antioch, where Peter found a large Gentile church he there enjoyed his liberty in Christ; he ate with the Gentiles, realizing that the middle wall of partition was broken down (Eph. ii:14) and that believing Jews and Gentiles were one in Christ. All went well till some from James in Jerusalem showed themselves in Antioch. Then Peter, afraid of opposition, not because he thought in the least that he was wrong, separated himself, leaving them which were of the circumcision. His example led the other Jewish believers to dissemble likewise with him and even Barnabas joined in and, as a result, the unity of the Spirit was given up and the truth of the gospel marred. And Paul when he saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel, rebuked Peter before them all. The leaven of the Pharisee, hypocrisy, is manifest in Peter's action. He wanted to appear before those who were still Jewish in their customs and sentiments as being in sympathy with them, and therefore he gave up his liberty in Christ, which he knew was according to the truth of the gospel. Paul rebuking Peter in public shows that Peter had not the least authority over Paul.

"If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" These are the words Paul addressed to Peter. Why should Gentiles be forced to live as Jews, when Peter, being a Jew, had lived as the Gentiles? Verses 15–18 reveal the fatal consequences of Peter's action. He shows that Peter was a transgressor by building again what he had destroyed (verse 18). How had Peter done so and what suggested the question "Is, therefore, Christ the minister of sin?" (verse 17). When Peter refused to eat with the Gentiles he went back to the law and was thereby attempting to be justified by works; he was building again the law. But, previous to that, he had abandoned the law as a means of justification before God and he had believed in Jesus Christ to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the

works of the law. He had found out that "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." By building again the system of the law, which he had given up as unable to justify him, he made himself a transgressor, because he had left it. Inasmuch as it was Christ who had led him to do this—was, then, Christ a minister of sin? God forbid. It was the doctrine of Christ which had made him a transgressor in giving up the law; for in building it again and going back to it he acknowledged that he was wrong when he had rejected it as a means of justification. This is the argument of these verses.

The concluding verses of this chapter give the truth of the position of a believer in Christ who is justified by faith. It is Paul's individual testimony which every believer in Christ may repeat, for what was the apostle's position is ours also. "For I through the law died to the law, that I might live unto God." The law had pronounced the sentence of death and condemnation upon him and, through the law he had died to the law. But the sentence of the law was executed upon him in the person of Christ, who took the curse of the law, the condemnation, upon Himself, and believing in Christ he had died as to the old man. The law had slain him, but Christ had died in his stead, and thus he had died to the law, for the law only has dominion over a man as long as he lives. Death, the death of Christ, had freed him from the dominion of the law. As having died with Christ, he was dead to the law.* And all this is true of every believer. The great and precious truth of being dead with Christ and living unto God is blessedly stated in Paul's triumphant declaration, "I was crucified with Christ."† The death of Christ has not only set the believer free from the guilt of sins, but has also put him to death as to the old man and delivered him from the power of sin in the flesh. "Knowing this, that our old

*Romans vi–vii gives us the doctrine concerning these blessed facts of being dead to the law and delivered from the power of sin.

†Not "I am crucified"; not in the sense of living as crucified with Christ, etc., but "I was crucified," put to death as to the old man, when Christ died.

man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin" (Rom. vi:6). Then follow the other equally blessed statements: "Nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Dead to sin and the law, the believer no longer lives in his old life, but he has another life, which is Christ—"Christ liveth in me." It is that life which we receive, believing on Him. And the principle which governs this life is not the law principle, but it is a life lived in the faith of the Son of God. "All life in the creature has an object—we cannot walk without one. If the Lord Jesus is our life, He is also, personally, the object of the life, and we live by faith in Him. The heart sees Him, looks to Him, feeds upon Him, is assured of His love, for He gave Himself for us. The life that we live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us. Happy certainty! Blessed assurance! It is a new life, the old man is crucified, and Christ, whose perfect love we know, is the sole object of faith and of the heart."* And then the conclusion. "I do not frustrate (set aside) the grace of God; for if righteousness is by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (or: has died for nothing). If righteousness can be obtained by works, by a self-made character, or through keeping ordinances, then the death of Christ was superfluous and the grace of God is set aside. Christ is dead in vain if there is any other way to obtain righteousness than by faith in Him and through the grace of God."

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*"It is this which always characterises the life of Christ in us: He Himself is its object—He alone. The fact, that it is by dying for us in love that He—who was capable of it, the Son of God—has given us thus freed from sin this life as our own, being ever before the mind, in our eyes He is clothed with the love He has thus shewn us. We live by faith of the Son of God, who has loved us, and given Himself for us. And here it is personal life, the individual faith that attaches us to Christ, and makes Him precious to us as the object of the soul's intimate faith."—Synopsis.

II. CONTRASTS BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE.

Chapters iii–iv.

CHAPTER III.

1. The gift of the Spirit not by the works of the law, but by hearing of faith. 1–5.
2. Righteousness not bestowed by the law, but by faith. 6–9.
3. The law curses; the curse born by Christ. 10–14.
4. The law cannot annul the covenant of promise. 15–18.
5. Wherefore serveth the law? 19–22.
6. Faith having come—no longer under the law. 23–25.
7. Sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 26–29.

What the law could not do and what grace has done for the believer in Christ is now unfolded. Paul addresses them as foolish, and asks, "Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" Who was responsible for the awful error they were following so destructive to the whole truth of the gospel? It was the witchery of Satan; as he tells them later, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you" (chapter v:7–8). As Christians, they possessed the Holy Spirit, as all true Christians receive Him and are sealed by the Spirit. They also enjoyed the ministry of the Spirit through the different gifts. And now he asks the question "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" There is no promise in the law that if it is kept in obedience, that God would send His Spirit to the heart of man to be the indwelling guest and make the obedient keeper of the law the temple of the Holy Spirit. The law does not promise even the Spirit. In Ezekiel xxxvi:27 the promise is made, "I will put My Spirit within you", but, as the context shows, this promise refers to the future when the remnant of Israel will turn to the Lord and the promised spiritual and national blessings are given to them through grace. The Galatians knew nothing of the law and were not under the law, for they were, by nature, idolators. They had received the Spirit by hearing of faith. Before this great gift could ever be bestowed the Son of God

had to die on the cross and be glorified (John vii:39). And all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, also receive the great gift of grace, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Sonship. They had received the Holy Spirit by simply believing. They were sealed by that Spirit and knew thereby that they were redeemed and the sons of God. If they possessed this seal of divine righteousness why should they add to it the works of the law? They acted, indeed, foolishly.*

The second argument is concerning righteousness. These false teachers made much of Abraham and the Jews honored him as the father of the nation. How did he obtain righteousness? It was not by the works of the law, for there was no law and no ordinances. "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." He believed and grace imputed this to him for righteousness.

This took place before his circumcision. "How was it, then, reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also" (Rom. iv:10–13). Thus, righteousness is apart from the law and circumcision has nothing whatever to do with salvation; neither has baptism or any other ordinance. These Judaizing teachers and perverters of the gospel probably told the Galatians about being linked with Abraham and the privilege of being the children of Abraham. Paul writes them that, as believers, they are

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*Strange, unscriptural doctrines concerning the Holy Spirit are taught in different sects and parties. Some teach that the Christian should earnestly seek this gift, and the baptism with the Spirit. They claim that each individual must make a definite experience of receiving the baptism with the Spirit. This seeking includes, what they term, a full surrender, etc., and after enough seeking, surrender, giving up and praying, they claim to have received the power of the Holy Spirit. The argument here refutes this teaching. The Holy Spirit is given to every believer in Christ.

without the works of the law and circumcision, the children of Abraham. "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." And the Scriptures, the Word of God, had anticipated this. The Word of God foresaw that, ultimately, in God's gracious purpose, the Gentiles were to be justified by faith. The Word of God had, so to speak, preached the gospel unto Abraham, the very gospel Paul was heralding among the Gentiles. This gospel-message, preached by the Scriptures, is the announcement, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." The logical conclusion, therefore, is "they which be of faith are blessed with believing Abraham."

The law cannot give righteousness, but it gives man something and that is the curse. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written, cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The law demands obedience, but it has no power to give a nature which delights in the law to keep it, nor can it bestow the power to fulfill its demands. Nothing can the law give to the sinner, but the curse.* But grace had also stated the faith principle in the Old Testament. "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, is manifest, for the just shall live by faith." But redemption has come. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." If a believer then goes back to the law and puts himself under that law, tries to live by it, he puts himself under the curse. He slights the precious work of Christ, who took the curse upon Himself, so that it can no longer fall upon us. And the result of Christ having removed the curse of the law is that the blessing of Abraham might be extended to the Gentiles through Him, so that all

*See quotation from Deut. xxvii:11–26. Six tribes were put on Mt. Gerizim to bless and six upon Mt. Ebal to curse. The six tribes on Gerizim were silent; they could utter no blessing, for the law cannot bless. But the tribes on Mt. Ebal uttered twelve times the word "Cursed." This is what the law does.

believers, both Jews and Gentiles, should receive the promised Spirit.

In verses 15–18, the priority of the grace-covenant is shown and that the law-covenant which came 430 years after cannot disannul the former covenant nor make the promise of none effect. If a covenant is made and confirmed, it cannot be rightly disannulled nor can anything be added to the same. The promises were made to Abraham; they were unconditional promises with no "if" attached to them, grace is the foundation of them. These promises were, afterward, confirmed to his seed. And that one seed (not seeds) is Christ. Isaac was a type of Him. And the original promise that all nations should be blessed in Abraham (Gen. xii:1–3) had been confirmed after the promised seed, Isaac, had been upon the altar (Gen. xxii:18). Isaac, upon the altar and taken from the altar, was a type of Christ, His death and resurrection (Heb. xi:19). The law-covenant can, therefore, not disannul the promise nor add to it. If the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

If, then, the law cannot give the Spirit of God, if it cannot give righteousness, if the law has no blessing for man, but pronounces a curse upon him, if it cannot, in any way, affect the original grace-covenant made with Abraham, confirmed in Isaac, then the logical question which follows is "Why did God give the law?"—"Wherefore, then, serveth the law?" (verse 19). The answer is "It was added because of transgressions." It was added not that sin might be curbed, or man might be saved by it, but that man might be constituted a transgressor and his hopeless and guilty condition fully demonstrated. It was introduced as a parenthetical thing, between the original promise and its fulfillment in Christ, in order that the moral condition of man might be manifested.* Therefore, it was a mere addition "till the seed (Christ) should come, to whom the promise was made." And the law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

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*See also Rom. iii:20; v:13; v:20; vii:7–9.

"Now, a mediator is not of one; but God is one." Angels in glory were present at Sinai (Ps. lxviii:17); God did not reveal Himself in His glory and a mediator was needed, that is, Moses. The statement "a mediator is not of one" means that mediatorship necessitates two parties. So there was God and Israel, Moses between as the mediator. But in the promise, the covenant made with Abraham and his seed, God, was the only One who spoke. Its fulfillment is not (as in the law-covenant) dependent upon a faithful God and Israel's obedience, but on God's faithfulness alone; all depended upon God Himself. The mediatorship of the Lord Jesus Christ is a different thing and not in view here at all. But the law is not against the promises of God. Man needed life; the law could not give that, neither can it give righteousness. All—Jews and Gentiles—were shut up under sin, so that the promise made to Abraham might be fulfilled to all believers through faith in Jesus Christ.

Before faith came—that is, before Christ had died and faith, as the great principle for the fullest blessing, had been made known—we, the Jews, were kept under the law, shut up to the faith which should, afterwards, be revealed. The Apostle writes of the condition of the Jews before the cross of Christ and before the faith in Him was fully revealed. Therefore, the law was their schoolmaster unto Christ, that they might be justified by faith. The law was, for the Jews, a pedagogue, just as a pedagogue in a Greek household had charge of the children during their minority. The authorized version, "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ," is not correct. Upon this the statement is often made that the law is like a whip to bring us to accept Christ. But that is not the meaning. The law was the schoolmaster for the Jews unto Christ, until Christ came—the schoolmaster up to the time of Christ. Verse 25 makes this clear. "But after that faith is come"—faith being fully made known after the finished work of Christ and preached in the Gospel—"we are no longer under the schoolmaster." A great change has come since the faith has been made known through the gospel. Not alone are believers no longer under the school-

master, but they are Sons of God. "For ye are all the sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ." Life and righteousness, the life from above and the righteousness of God are needed for divine sonship. The law cannot give life and righteousness, but grace bestows both on the believer and makes him a son of God. Being baptized unto Christ, they had put on Christ and had assumed in profession the name of Christ; a new place given to all, "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Inasmuch as they were Christ's, heirs of the promise, they could not be under the law. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

CHAPTER IV.

1. Under the law in the state of minority. 1–3.
2. The Son revealed to redeem. 4–5.
3. Because ye are Sons; the Spirit of Sonship. 6-7.
4. The backsliding Galatians. 8–20.
5. The sons of the bondwoman and of the free woman. 21–31.

Jewish believers were, before Christ had died, the children of God, and as such they did not differ from servants. They were in a state of minority, as children who do not know the father's thoughts, nor could they fully know God as Father.

"He compares the believer before the coming of Christ to a child under age, who has no direct relation with his father as to his thoughts, but who receives his father's orders, without his accounting for them to him, as a servant would receive them. He is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Thus the Jews, although they were heirs of the promises, were not in connection with the Father and His counsels in Jesus, but were in tutelage to principles that appertained to the system of the present world, which is but a corrupt and fallen creation. Their walk was ordained of God in this system, but did not go beyond it. We speak of the system by which they were guided, whatever divine light they might receive, from time to time, to reveal heaven to them, to encourage them in hope, while making

the system under the rule of which they were placed yet darker. Under the law then, heirs as they were, they were still in bondage."*

But a great change had taken place. "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem those under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." God sent His Son from His bosom to become man and "made under the law." He took His place down here in two relationships. First with man, through the woman, and with the Jews, as born under the law. Sin and death came in by the woman; Christ came into this world by woman also. Through the law, man is under condemnation and Christ came as under that law. But that law was no bondage for Him. He fully worked out the righteousness of the law. Yet his righteous and holy life could not redeem those under the law. Redemption from the curse of the law was accomplished in the death of the Cross. And the glorious result of the coming of the Son of God and His finished work is for all believers in Him "the adoption of sons"—that is, placed, through grace, before God as sons. And because believing Jews and Gentiles are sons, through the efficacy of the redemption wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ, God sent the blessed proof and power of sonship. "He sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The Holy Spirit was given as the seal of redemption, and as the joy of sonship. "Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

"Was it possible, then, that any could desire to put the Gentiles under the law, when they (the Jews) had been brought out from it themselves by the will of God, the work of Christ, and the witness of the Holy Spirit? What a gross inconsistency! What a subversion, not only of the truth of God revealed in the gospel, but also of redemption, which is its basis! For Christ bought off those that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, bringing

*Synopsis.

them, by grace, into a place of known salvation and intelligent joy in relation with our God and Father, out of that bondage and nonage which the law supposes."*

Then follows the appeal of the apostle to the backsliding Galatians, who were fast falling away from grace and turning to the weak and beggarly elements. Verses 8–10 are of much interest and significance. They were heathen, and knowing not God, they served idols. Now, as being converted, they had known God, or rather God had known them. Turning to Judaism, to the law with its ordinances, meant, for them, a turning back to the weak and beggarly elementary things in which they were as heathen. They were, practically, turning again to that which they had left—"how turn ye again?" As heathen they had ceremonies, different offerings, and they observed different days by which they tried to please their supposed gods. Ritualistic observances upon Christian ground are more than a perverted gospel: they are heathenish in principle. Some African fetich-priest attires himself in a fantastic costume. He takes a rattle, dances and mumbles something in an unintelligible way. Then he declares what he does will induce the gods to send rain. In a magnificient edifice called "church" stands a man who wears different colored robes. This man goes through different ceremonies, bows and crosses himself, mumbles something in a foreign language, then lifts up a receptacle before which the people bow in worship. He claims that, through him, blessing comes upon the people. Both, the African heathen-priest and the ritualistic-priest follow the same principle, and the practice of the so-called "Christian priest" is as much heathenish as the practice of the other. And so as to the observance of special holy days, months and years. "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." The gospel knows nothing of the observance of days and seasons such as saint-days, Lent, etc. All these special saint-days and

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*W. Kelly.

most of the feast-days kept in Christendom were taken from the heathen.

Then what a tender appeal follows! He reminds them of the former days when he preached first the gospel unto them. In the infirmity of the flesh, physical weakness, they had not despised nor rejected him, but received him as an angel of God, as the Christ whose blessed ambassador he was. Then they enjoyed great blessedness and would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him. But where was their blessedness now? Had he become their enemy in speaking the truth to them? He addresses them as His little children "of whom I travail in birth again."

He needed, so to speak, to travail in birth afresh with them till Christ should be formed in them. Nevertheless, he calls them his children: his love inspired him with confidence, and yet filled his heart with uneasiness. He would have desired to be with them that he might change his voice, suiting it to their state; not only teaching them the truth, but doing whatever their need required. Mark here the deep love of the apostle. Moses, faithful as he was, grew weary of the burden of the people and said: Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swearest unto their fathers? (Num. xi:12); but the apostle is willing to travail in birth with them as his children a second time, in order that their souls might be saved.

Verses 21–31 give an interesting, typical foreshadowing and contrast. As they were abandoning grace, he wants the law to speak to them. Abraham had two sons, one by Hagar, the bondmaid, born after the flesh; the other son was Isaac, the son of promise, born by Sarah, the free woman. Both illustrate the covenants of God. Mount Sinai, the law covenant, which gendereth to bondage, is represented in Hagar and her son; the other, the covenant of promise, "Jerusalem which is above"—the mother of us all—it is the true church of God viewed in her heavenly state; she is free.

He quotes Isaiah liv:1, "Rejoice thou, barren, that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not, for the desolate has many more children than she which hath an husband." These words are addressed to Jerusalem during the millennial kingdom, in the time of her promised restoration. Then Israel, redeemed and blessed, will look back and find that, during our age, this gospel-age, many more children were begotten by the gospel, during the time when Israel was cast off and Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentiles than at the time when Jerusalem flourished and enjoyed the favor of Jehovah. "Now, we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." Those who believe and are saved by grace are, therefore, the true children of promise. But, as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted "him that was after the Spirit, even so it is now." The Jews persecuted Paul for preaching the gospel. They opposed the gospel and all those who believed in Christ. But what was said about the bondwoman and her son? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the free woman." This has happened to Israel; she, for a time, is disowned and their house is left desolate. "So then, therefore, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." It would be impossible to be children of both. Equally impossible is it to be under law and under grace. The two cannot exist together. We are children of the free woman and of her only and have nothing whatever to do with the law-covenant. We belong to a risen Christ, with whom we have died, who has borne the curse for us and bestowed upon us life and righteousness, and, therefore, we are free from the law, from its service and ceremonies.

III. THE WALK OF THE JUSTIFIED BELIEVER, AS NOT UNDER THE LAW, BUT UNDER GRACE.

Chapters v–vi.

CHAPTER V.

1. Stand fast! Be not entangled! 1–6.
2. Exhortations and the law of love. 7–15.
3. Flesh and Spirit. 16–21.
4. The Fruits of the Spirit. 22–26.

The first exhortation is to maintain, by faith, the liberty which is found in Christ, to stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ has made the believer free and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. The believer has perfect liberty in Christ; he is absolutely dead to the law and the law is not to be used by him in any way. But verse 13, where the apostle speaks again of this liberty, must be brought in connection with the opening statement of this chapter. "For, brethren, ye have been called into liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." The liberty the believer has in Christ is to be used for holiness. When God redeems from the curse of the law it is a redemption unto holiness, to live a righteous and holy life; the holy Spirit indwelling the believer does not give license to live after the flesh.

But as being in Christ, dead to the law, if they become circumcised Christ would profit them nothing and they were bound to fulfill the whole law. Going back to the law for righteousness, they had fallen from grace. This is the only time "fallen from grace" is used in the Bible. It has been strangely misapplied by a certain system of theology to deny the security of the believer in Christ. It is generally used to describe a Christian who has fallen in sin and, as it is claimed, lost his relationship as a child of God and is, therefore, once more under judgment. Falling from grace does not mean this; it means to give up the grace of the gospel in order to satisfy the requirements of the law. To go back under the law and its bondage is falling from grace. Verse 5

does not mean that a believer hopes for righteousness; he possesses righteousness by faith. Indwelt by the Spirit, the believer waits not for righteousness, but for the hope of righteousness by faith. And the hope of righteousness is the coming glory, when all those who are saved by grace will be glorified and be like Christ.

Then the earnest pleadings and warnings. They had run well; who hindered them? It was Satan who had led them astray. Once more leaven is used. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Even so it is today in Christendom. The leaven of a perverted gospel has well nigh leavened everything. He was deeply concerned about the spiritual condition of these Galatian Christians. But while he was in doubt about them and he was overwhelmed with grief because they abandoned grace, his heart, after all, was also in peace about them. "I have confidence in you through the Lord that ye will be now otherwise minded." He cast them as his burden upon the Lord and he knew the Lord, who loveth His own, would after all bring it about that they would surely not be otherwise minded. He who troubled them and bewitched them with that spurious gospel, whosoever he would be, would bear his judgment; and he wishes that these troublers were cut off. "And I, brethren, if I preach yet circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then is the offence of the cross ceased." He had probably been charged by some of endorsing circumcision and preaching it. If such were the case, what further excuse was there for the Jews to persecute him? If he were still preaching circumcision the offence of the cross would have been done away. Circumcision stands for the religion of the natural man. The religious spirit of the natural man is always in opposition to the true gospel. Difficulties will cease and the world will even applaud the preaching if the religion of the flesh, the "do-religion" — "observe" — "keep" — "reform", etc., is proclaimed. Of this we see much today. The true gospel of grace, proclaimed upon the finished work of Christ, with nothing to do and nothing to pay, is still the same stumbling-block.

The believer posseses in Christ true liberty (verse 13); a liberty, as already stated, not to sin, but to walk and serve God in holiness. It is the liberty of the new nature, the divine nature, which gives power over sin. The law seeks to constrain the old nature, which is impossible; but it is the mighty constraint of love, given by the Holy Spirit. And that love is the fulfilment of the law. The law, as a rule, for the believer's life is, therefore, not needed. The gospel of grace sets the believer free and makes him happy in the assurance of God's love and his own salvation; and the Holy Spirit is there. Under His guidance and power, walking in the Spirit, the lust of the flesh will not be fulfilled. And the believer, walking thus, has the blessed assurance that sin shall not have dominion over him. "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. vi:14). The law had not the power to do this, but grace has delivered us from the law of sin and death (Rom. viii:1–4).

In the preceding part of the Epistle he had set forth Christian justification by faith, in contrast with works of the law. He here shows that God produces holiness. Instead of exacting it, as did the law with regard to human righteousness, from the nature which loves sin, He produces it in the human heart, as wrought by the Spirit.

"This life, produced in us by the operation of the Holy Ghost through the word, is led by the Spirit who is given to believers; its rule is also in the word. Its fruits are the fruits of the Spirit. The Christian walk is the manifestation of this new life, of Christ our life, in the midst of the world. If we follow this path—Christ Himself—if we walk in His steps, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. It is thus sin is avoided, not by taking the law to compel man to do what he does not like; the law has no power to compel the flesh to obey, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be. The new life loves to obey, loves holiness, and Christ is its strength and wisdom by the Holy Ghost. The flesh is indeed there; it lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusts against the flesh, to prevent man from walking

as he would. But if we walk in the Spirit, we are not under the law."*

The works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are given in verses 19–23. In a more literal rendering, the works of the flesh, sixteen in number, are as follows: Fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strifes, jealousies, angers, contentions, disputes, factions, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revels and things like these. Such is the old nature of man and such the fruit it bears. They that do such things, living according to the flesh, shall not inherit God's kingdom. And only the power of the Spirit of God can deliver from the outworking of this fallen nature, the flesh, which is still in the believer. The Holy Spirit is in the child of God to manifest this power, but it means subjection to Himself.

The Spirit also produces His own blessed fruit in the life of the believer. The first three are: Love, joy and peace. These give the blessed consciousness the believer has in his heart of his relationship to God, which consciousness comes through the Spirit. The other six fruits: "long-suffering, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control," witness in the believer's walk to the fact that the love, the joy and peace of God are realities in the soul. The believer who walks according to the Spirit manifests in his walk the fruits of the indwelling Spirit and against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh and its lusts. They have accepted the sentence of the cross which has put the old man with its lusts into the place of death. God declares us as dead with Christ and looks upon us thus (Col. iii:3). And this great truth must be lived. The believer lives in the Spirit and is called upon to walk in the Spirit so that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in him. "Let us not be desirous of vain-glory (the law fosters such a spirit, but grace rumbles), provoking one another, envying one another"—which is the sad effect of vain-glory, provocation and envy.

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*Notes on Galatians—J. N. Darby

CHAPTER VI.

1. Concerning the Restoration of a brother. 1–5.
2. Concerning Reaping and Sowing. 6–10.
3. The conclusion. 11–18.

Practical exhortations conclude the defence of the gospel. The previous chapter stated that they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh and its lusts. In the beginning of this chapter the treatment to be accorded to a man (a brother) who has been overtaken in a fault is given. The law would demand the cutting off of such a one. It is harsh and merciless. But grace bears a different message. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." The sin of a believer does not put him out of the true church, the body of Christ, but it interrupts communion with God. The erring brother is to be treated in a spiritof meekness and to be restored. Then law is mentioned, but not the law of Moses, but the law of Christ. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." He is the great burden-bearer for His people and to bear the burdens of others is to act as the LordJesus does. None is to think of himself to be something when he is nothing; the legal spirit puffs up. Every man is to prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. "For every man shall bear his own burden"—this is in reference to the judgment-seat of Christ when each must give an account of himself.

Another instruction is concerning ministry to those who teach. "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." This is the way a loving and gracious Lord has appointed. The believer who receives the ministry of the Word through one of the gifts in the body of Christ has a personal responsibility towards him who ministers. He is to communicate to him in earthly things, and thus have a part in his ministry. How different in Christendom, with its fixed salaries, pew-rents and, worse still, when evangelists appeal to the unsaved, to Catholics

and Jews, to swell the collection. Important is the principle of verses 7–9. We quote from another:

"We may repeat again that the toleration of evil is never grace. It would be a perversion of the very thought of grace to imagine this. 'Be not deceived,' he says, therefore, 'God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption and he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.' These are principles of absolute necessity. Nothing can alter them. If a man sows a certain seed, he knows, or he should know, that he can get of that seed nothing but what is proper to it. If a man sows to his flesh, he sows, in fact, the corruption which he reaps. The very principle of self-will which must, of necessity, be in it, is a principle which is essentially that of sin. Every form of sin will come under this, and God may allow, in fact, such seed to come to harvest, in order that we may recognize its character, as we otherwise would not do. In the opposite way to that of the man who, bearing good seed, goes forth even weeping, but returns with joy, a man in this way may sow his seed rejoicing, but it will be the return that will be sorrowful. It does not follow that God cannot come in and deliver us from what would otherwise be the necessary fruit of such sowing, if only there be the true self-judgment of it in the soul; for to a Christian, the reaping of it is but in order to self-judgment, and if we will judge it first, there may be no need of reaping at all. Judge it first or last we surely must, or the thing will develop for what it is and be manifest, not to ourselves alone it may be, but to others also. On the other hand, 'He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.' Blessed and wonderful reaping! The life is looked at here, of course, in its practical character, in its fruits and activities. The life itself, the life which produces this, is no matter of reaping at all, it is what we must have to be Christians. Nevertheless, we can reap it as a practical thing, and the witness of it is that, even though reaped here upon earth, it is something which has eternity in it."*

*Numerical Bible.

Verse 11 tells us that he had written this letter with his own hand and that in large letters. It seems as if the energy of the Holy Spirit came upon him in such a degree that he had to dispense with the usual amanuensis he employed. Then he reverts to the great controversy once more. These false teachers, the proselyting teachers, wanted to boast with the Galatians, but he knew only one boasting or glorying, "in the cross of our Lord Jesus, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The cross meant everything to him and thus it should be with every believer, saved by grace.

But what does he mean when he speaks of bearing in his body the marks—the stigmata—of the Lord Jesus? The Romish conception of the supernaturally imprinted scars of the nails in the apostle's body does not need to be investigated, for it is a superstition. The expression simply means the trials and sufferings he underwent for Christ's sake and which left their marks on his frail body (2 Cor. xi:24–33). What the Galatians needed the most is the final word of Paul to the Galatians. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your Spirit, brethren."

EPHESIANS

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The Epistle to the Ephesians

Introduction.

The city of Ephesus was situated in Lydia on the River Cayster, about forty miles from Smyrna. It was a place of considerable commerce and also noted for its magnificent temple of Artemis, which was from very ancient times the centre of the worship of that goddess. This temple was burnt down by Herostratus 355 B.C., but rebuilt at immense cost, and was one of the wonders of the ancient world. Pliny tells us that it was 425 feet long and 220 feet in breadth. All Asia contributed to its erection, and 127 magnificent columns were bestowed by so many kings. Little models of the temple in silver, with the image of the goddess enshrined in them, were made for sale, and sold in large quantities (Acts xix:24–29).

From Acts xviii:19–21 we learn of Paul's first brief visit to that city. He was then hastening to Jerusalem to be there at Pentecost. After his visit to Jerusalem he returned to Ephesus (Acts xix:1) and remained there laboring for about three years, so that he could say later to the elders of Ephesus, "therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts xx:31). During this time the Ephesian assembly was founded, composed of Jews and Gentiles, who heard and believed the gospel. On his last journey to Jerusalem he did not visit Ephesus, but called the elders of the church to meet him at Miletus, where he said farewell and exhorted them (Acts xx:18–35).

The Epistle Written by Paul.

The Epistle to the Ephesians was written by the Apostle Paul when he was a prisoner (chapter iii:1, iv:1, vi:20). There can be no doubt that the Colossian Epistle and the Epistle to Philemon were sent by Paul the same time as the Ephesian Epistle. The date was about 62 A.D. Tychicus and Onesimus, the runaway slave, but now through grace "a brother beloved" (Phil. 16) were sent to Colossae by Paul (Col. iv:7–9). Tychicus carried the letter addressed to the Colossians to correct the evils which had arisen in that church, and to warn them against the wicked doctrines which were being promulgated amongst them. Onesimus the slave carried that beautiful little epistle addressed to his master Philemon. And at the same time when Tychicus and Onesimus left Rome, Paul handed to Tychicus the epistle to the Ephesians. Never before and never after were such weighty and blessed documents entrusted to human messengers. The reception of

the authorship of Paul has been almost universal; only in very recent times has the Pauline authorship been foolishly questioned by some rationalistic critics.

Some scholars claim that the words "at Ephesus" should be omitted and that the epistle was not addressed to the Ephesians at all. The chief objection is, that if this epistle is addressed to the church at Ephesus, it would be inexplicable that Paul should not have sent a single message of personal greeting to the Ephesians, amongst whom he had spent so long a time, and to whom he was bound by ties of such close affection. But there are also other epistles written by Paul which do not contain such personal greetings; for instance, first and second Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, first and second Thessalonians and first Timothy. Other objections have been raised. Dean Alford states rightly "there is nothing in its contents inconsistent with such an address" (to the Ephesians). We find in it clear indications that its readers were mixed Jews and Gentiles (chapter ii:14 compare with Acts xix:10). It would seem quite improbable that the apostle should not have sent an epistle to Ephesus, where the Lord had so largely owned his testimony and where the Lord had so miraculously delivered him when he fought with beasts (1 Cor. xv:32). But while this epistle was undoubtedly first sent to Ephesus, it may have been used as a kind of a circular letter, being sent to and read by other assemblies. The epistle mentioned in Col. iv:16 was probably this epistle.

Its Deep and Blessed Message.

In the Epistle to the Colossians Paul makes the statement, "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the Word of God" (Col. i:25). To fulfil the Word of God does not mean, as often stated, that Paul fulfilled his ministry and was faithful in it. It means rather that to him was given the revelation which makes full, or completes, the Word of God. The highest and most glorious revelation, which the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has been pleased to give, He has given through the Apostle Paul. The two prison Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians embody this completion of the Word of God. The Ephesian Epistle holds the place of pre-eminence. The revelation which is given in this Epistle concerning believing sinners, whom God has redeemed by the blood of His Son, and exalted in Him into the highest possible position, is by far the greatest revelation. God is revealing His own loving heart and tells out by His Spirit how He loved us and thought of us before the foundation of the world. He shows forth the riches of His Grace and now makes known the secret He held back in former ages. How rich it all is! Like God Himself, so this revelation, coming from His loving heart, is inexhaustible. We may speak of Ephesians as the rich Epistle of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

who, rich in mercy, tells us of the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. But even this definition does not tell out half of all the Glory this wonderful document contains. It is God's highest and God's best. Even God cannot say more than what He has said in this filling full of His Word.

In the Psalms we read: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Psalm xix:1). We lift up our eyes and behold the wonders of God's creation, which He called into existence by His Son and for Him (Col. i:19). Here in this Epistle another heaven is opened. If the heavens of Creation are so wonderful and their depths unfathomable, how much more wonderful are the Heavenlies into which Christ has entered, where He now is seated, far above all principality and power and might, and into which God's grace has brought us in Christ! The first three chapters contain this great revelation. What God has accomplished in His Son, to the praise of the glory of His grace; how He makes believers one with His Son, sharers of His glory, is told out in these chapters. The church, the body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all; the one body in which believing Jews and Gentiles are united; the building growing into an holy temple, the habitation of God by the Spirit, and the ultimate destiny of that body, are further revelations in these great chapters.

The central verse of the first three chapters is found in chapter ii:10, "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained, that we should walk in them." The word "workmanship" is in the Greek "Poiema," from which our word "Poem" is derived. It is a beautiful thought in itself to think of those who are saved by grace, and united to Christ as "the poem of God." But the word "Poiema" may also be rendered "Masterpiece" or "Masterwork."

Only once more is the same word found in the original language of the New Testament Scriptures. In Rom. i:20 it is used in connection with the physical creation. God has produced two great masterworks in which He manifests His power. He called the universe into existence out of nothing. What He, as the omnipotent One can do, is seen in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the sustenance of His creation. His eternal power and Godhead are revealed in creation (Rom. i:19–20). But the creation of the universe out of nothing is not the greatest masterpiece of God. God has done something greater. He has produced a work, which reveals Him in a far higher degree. That greater masterpiece is the redemption of sinners. God took only six days to bring order out of the chaos of the disturbed original creation and to call into existence the present earth and heavens, but He spent forty days with Moses in directing him to build the

tabernacle, because the work of redemption is more glorious than the work of creation.

God's creation and also the Bible, His revelation, may be studied by the telescope and the microscope. A telescopic sweep of this wonderful Epistle is hardly sufficient. The microscopic examination brings out its wonders. "The student of Ephesians must not expect to go over his ground too rapidly; must not be disappointed, if the week's end finds him still on the same paragraph, or even on the same verse, weighing and judging—penetrating gradually, by the power of the mind of the Spirit, through one outer surface after another, getting in his hand one and another ramifying thread, till at last he grasps the main cord whence they are diverged, and where they all unite—and stands rejoicing in his prize, deeper rooted in the faith, and with a firmer hold on the truth as it is in Christ. And as the wonderful effect of the spirit of inspiration on the mind of man is nowhere in Scripture more evident than in this Epistle, so, to discern those things of the Spirit, is the spiritual mind here more than anywhere else required."*

And the more we read and study this Epistle, the more we will be impressed with the greatness and the glory of the revelation it brings to our hearts. It is a theme for eternity. How needful the study of this Epistle is for us in these days! The truths revealed will keep us in the days of apostasy and lift us above the materialistic spirit of the times. Without earnest and continued meditation on the great truths made known in this Epistle, spiritual growth and enjoyment are impossible. May it please the Holy Spirit to lead the writer and the reader into a better and deeper heart knowledge of His wonderful grace.

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*Dean Alford. Prolegomena.

The Division of Ephesians

The Epistle to the Ephesians has two clearly defined sections. Chapter iv begins with the following words: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called." What the calling is wherewith the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has called those who believe in His Son, is revealed in the first three chapters. As stated in the introduction, God's great Masterwork, the redemption of sinners, is blessedly told out in the opening chapters of this Epistle. The last three chapters contain exhortations and instructions to walk worthy of this high calling, to manifest in every way the great Work of God.

I. **THE MASTERWORK OF GOD.** Chapter i–iii.

1. **The Godhead at Work.** Chapter i.
2. **The Production of the Masterwork and its Destiny.** Chapter ii:1–10.
3. **The Mystery now made Known.** Chapters ii:11–iii:21.

II. **THE PRACTICAL MANIFESTATION IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER.** Chapters iv–vi.

1. **Walking worthy of the Calling.** Chapter iv:1–6.
2. **The Ministry and its Purpose.** Chapter iv:7–16.
3. **The Walk in Holiness and Righteousness.** Chapters iv:17–v:21.
4. **Manifestation in the Family Relationship.** Chapters v:22–vi:4.
5. **Exhortations to Servants and Masters.** Chapter vi:5–9.
6. **The Warfare and the Panoply of God.** Chapter vi:10–20.
7. **The Conclusions.** Chapter vi:21–24.

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE MASTERWORK OF GOD.

Chapters i–iii.

1. The Godhead at Work.

CHAPTER I.

1. The Introduction. 1–2.
2. The Great Doxology. 3.
3. The Work of the Father. 4–6.
4. The Work of the Son. 7–12.
5. The Work of the Holy Spirit. 13–14.
6. The Parenthetical Prayer to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory. 15–23.

In the brief introductory words to this Epistle, Paul speaks of himself as an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. It is to be noticed that the will of God is repeatedly mentioned in this first chapter. All blessings mentioned in this epistle flow from the will of God. What God hath done for us in Christ is "according to the good pleasure of His will" (verse 5). Then we read also of "having made known unto us the mystery of His will "(verse 9) and "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (verse 11). This will of God goes back to eternity, before the foundation of the world. This will made the erstwhile persecutor of the church, the Apostle of Jesus Christ, the instrument through whom that blessed will of God is now fully revealed. The epistle is addressed "to the Saints and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." This does not mean two classes of believers. All believers are Saints —separated ones. Yet a Saint may not be faithful. Many who are saved by grace and are constituted Saints in Christ are unfaithful in their walk and testimony. The words "to the Saints and to the faithful in Christ Jesus" correspond to the two divisions of the epistle. In the first three chapters we learn that God has made us His Saints in Christ; in the last three chapters we are exhorted to walk in obedience and be faithful.

The doxology (verse 3) marks the beginning of the epistle. When we reach the end of this first section we find another doxology (iii:20–21). Between these two doxologies are found the unsearchable riches of God's Grace in Christ. The third verse is in itself the key to the great and deep revelation which follows in this chapter. It is the bud which the Holy Spirit gradually unfolds. The Godhead in blessing believers is revealed in the doxology. First we find the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the author of all blessings. In the second place we learn that the blessings are in the Son of God, in Christ. Then thirdly, we read what kind of blessings we receive in Christ, "every spiritual blessing," that is, blessings communicated by the third person of the Godhead, God the Holy Spirit. The phrase "in the heavenly places" (or Heavenlies) is peculiar to this epistle. We find it five times: Chapters i:3, 19, ii:6, iii:10 and vi:12. It means both the nature of the blessings which we have in a risen and glorified Christ, and the locality, where our Lord is in glory. The three persons of the Godhead are mentioned in the third verse. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has blessed us; these blessings are in the Son and are communicated by the Holy Spirit. What follows is very interesting. In verses 4–14 we have the three persons of the Godhead revealed and their work in the redemption of sinners. Read verses 6, 12 and 14. Each is an utterance of praise—"to the praise of the glory of His grace" (verse 6); "that we should be to the praise of His glory" (verse 12); "unto the praise of His glory" (verse 14). Each of these verses marks the close of what is said about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In verses 4–6 we read what the Father has done; verses 7–12 reveal what we have and are in the Son, in Christ; verses 13–14 reveal the work of God, the Holy Spirit.

Three great facts are mentioned of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the World.

2. He hath predestinated us unto the Son-place in Christ.
3. He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.

What wonderful statements these are! We are in them face to face with the deepest revelation. To deny this would stamp these words as the imaginations of a deceiver. Only revelation can make known that which happened before the foundation of the world. Whatever is in God's eternity, that unfathomable existence without beginning, is beyond man's ability to grasp and therefore unrevealed. But here the great truth is made known that God, before there was a world, planned His Masterwork. With Him in His bosom was His blessed Son, the Son of His love. In Him, by Him and for Him all things were called into existence. Yet before this creation was effected, God knew the outcome. Surprise is an impossibility with God. He knows the end from the beginning. The whole story of man's fall and its results was not hidden from Him. And before it ever came to pass God made provision. And those who would accept Christ, as their Saviour, He willed should be before Him holy and without blame, become partakers of His own divine nature. This God willed before the foundation of the world, and this is now, through grace, the portion of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. And, furthermore, He predestinated all who believe in Christ to the Son-place.*

The authorized version speaks of "adoption of children." This hardly expresses it correctly. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are not adopted into the family of God; they are born into the family. The Greek has only one word "Son-place." We are placed into the position of Sons.

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*A brief word on "predestination." This word, which means "marked out" is nowhere found in connection with the Gospel, nor does it say anywhere in the Word, what some have said, that God has predestinated human beings to be lost. But while we do not read that He ever predestinated any one to be lost we read "God would have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii:4). God has nothing to say to a lost world about predestination. His grace, bringing salvation has appeared unto all men, God's offer of salvation is therefore to all.

Not alone hath God given to us His own nature, but He gives us, because we have that nature in and through His Son, the place as Sons. Think of what God might have done for those, who by wicked works are His enemies. He might have given us the place of unfallen angels, the wonderful ministers of Heaven. What mercy that would have been! Or He might have lifted us to the dignity of an Archangel, full of beauty and power. But even that would not have been the very best He could have done in the riches of His Grace and Love. He has made us Sons, like *the* Son, whom He raised from the dead and seated at His own right hand.

And then He hath accepted us in the Beloved One. All this God planned and willed before the foundation of the world.

The Beloved One having been mentioned, we read at once of His Work. Three facts are given of the Work of the Son of God:

1. He redeemed us by His blood.

2. In Him we received the revelation of the mystery of His will.

3. In Him we obtain an inheritance (verses 7–12).

He came from the bosom of the Father to this earth to redeem us, so that God's eternal will might be accomplished. Redemption, the taking out of the condition in which we are by nature, is a necessity, and has been accomplished by the blood of the Son of God, which was shed on the cross. He paid the price and has set us free. The riches of His grace by the redemption through His blood includes all our needs as sinners; the forgiveness of sins, mentioned here, is, so to speak, the foundation.

"Whosoever will" and "Whosoever believeth" are the glorious terms of God's good news to all alike. But when we believe, we *know* that we are chosen and predestinated. Those who have believed on Christ are predestinated and they possess the Son-place. Then having believed, we know that we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.

The words which follow put before us some blessed and deep truths. Redeemed through His blood, having redemption, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of Grace, He hath made known unto us the mystery of His will. God wants His elect, His church, to know the secret things of His will and what He hath purposed in Himself. Therefore He hath made the riches of His Grace abound towards us in all wisdom and intelligence. God has been pleased to make known in Christ the mystery of His will. It is the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began (Rom. xvi:25), so that we know in Christ and through Christ the fulness of His purpose. That mystery of God is Christ, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. ii:3). Christ, who has redeemed us by His blood, was raised from the dead. God "set Him at His own right hand in the Heavenlies"—"He hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Chapter i:21–23). This is the mystery: that Christ risen from the dead, seated at the right hand of God, is the Head and those who believe on Him constitute the church, His body. This body is destined, according to the eternal purpose of God, to share the Glory of the Head. This purpose is still in the future. The administration (or dispensation) of the fulness of times has not yet come. When it comes all things will be headed up in the Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth.

And in Christ we have an inheritance. In Him we have obtained an inheritance; it is equally true, that we are redeemed by His blood, His inheritance. And our inheritance in Christ is that we shall be like Him; be joint-heirs with Him and be forever with the Lord.

The Work of the Holy Spirit is revealed in verses 13 and 14. Three things are also mentioned of Him and His work:

1. Hearing and believing resulting in the quickening by the Spirit.

2. The Sealing by the Holy Spirit of Promise.

3. The Holy Spirit the earnest of our inheritance.

These words are of great importance. The Son of God came to this earth to redeem us and because He has finished the work the Father gave Him to do, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, has come to do His work.

Three words are prominent in the thirteenth verse, the words "heard," "believed" and "sealed." They go together. The Word of Truth, the Gospel of salvation must be heard and believed; the hearing and believing results in the sealing with the Holy Spirit of promise. The Holy Spirit indwelling the believer is the earnest of the inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession takes place.*

A brief restatement of the work of the Godhead will be helpful:

1. We found *God the Father* has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. *God the Son* came down from Heaven's Glory and redeemed us by His Blood. *God the Holy Spirit* quickens those who hear and believe. He is here because Christ finished His work on the Cross.

2. *God the Father* has predestinated us unto the Son-place. *God the Son* reveals, to all who are sons with Him, the mystery of His will, concerning the future of the new creation. *God the Holy Spirit* because we are sons, possesses us and keeps those whom He possesses. He is the Spirit of Sonship.

3. *God* the *Father* has accepted us in the Beloved. *God the Son* has given us in Himself an inheritance. *God the Holy Spirit* is the earnest of that inheritance.

Surely this is revelation from God. So blessedly simple, so profound that all the eternal ages will not suffice to sound its depths. No man could have ever discovered or invented such a plan. Let us bow before it in worship and yield our lives "to the Praise of the Glory of His Grace."

In verses 15–23 we have the first prayer in this epistle; the second prayer is found at the close of the third chapter.

*For a more complete exposition we refer the reader to our larger work on "The Masterpiece of God."

Let us notice that the greatest revelation of God as given in this epistle has two prayers connected with it. The revelation is given to His people that they might know it and enjoy it. Prayer is needed for this. First, there is thanksgiving (verses 15–16).

The prayer here is addressed to "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory." The prayer in the third chapter is made to "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This corresponds most beautifully to the blessed revelation in the first fourteen verses of this chapter. "God and Father" are the blessed words, which stand in the foreground of this Epistle. God is Light and God is Love. The first prayer is a prayer for light, that His redeemed people may know, be enlightened; therefore it is addressed to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. The second prayer in the third chapter is for love, and therefore addressed to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then we find three petitions: 1. "That ye may know what is the Hope of His Calling." The Hope of God's Calling is that we shall be One with Him, whom He raised from the dead and to whom He gave glory. 2. That we may know "the riches of the Glory of His inheritance in the Saints." The riches into which God, the Father of Glory, has brought us through Him, who laid His Glory by, is told out in this Epistle. It is the rich Epistle of our riches in Christ. "The Riches of His Grace" (Eph. i:7); "the Riches of the Glory of His Inheritance" (i:18); "Rich in Mercy" (ii:4); "the exceeding Riches of His Grace" (ii:7); "the unsearchable Riches of Christ" (iii:8); "according to the Riches of His Glory" (iii:16); these are the passages in which we read of His Riches towards us and our Riches in Him.

And what is the meaning "the riches of the Glory of His inheritance in the Saints?" We have an inheritance, and He has us for His inheritance. He is our inheritance, and we are His inheritance. The Glory of Christ's inheritance are the Saints, for whom He died, the many sons He brings

to Glory. The church is the fulness of Him, who filleth all in all.

3. And the third petition is that we may know "the exceeding greatness of His power which is to us-ward who believe." It is resurrection power, the power which raised Him from the dead and seated Him on God's right hand, which is to us-ward who believe. We can count on it. Ultimately the same power which raised Him up and carried Him through the heavens, will bring all the redeemed into glory.

In the presence of the words of verse 23 one feels more like worshipping than trying to expound their meaning. Marvellous words! They tell out the blessed Masterpiece of God. Christ the Head; the church, chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, the body. The Head is in Glory; the body not yet joined to the Head. He waits in Glory; the Saints wait on earth. The Body needs the Head, but the Head also needs the Body. "The Christ" will be complete when the Body is joined to the Head by the mighty power of God. The church as His Body is His fulness; it makes Him complete. And when that is reached, when Head and Body, Christ and the church, are united in Glory, then will the hope of His calling be realized and He will have the Glory of His inheritance in the Saints, and we shall know the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward.

2. The Production of the Masterwork and its Destiny.

CHAPTER II:1–10.

1. What we are by Nature. 1–3.
2. What God does—rich in Mercy. 4–6.
3. The Destiny of the Masterwork. 7.
4. Saved by Grace. 8–10.

After the great revelation of the first chapter and the prayer which followed, the production of the Masterpiece itself is now brought more fully into view. We have before us a revelation concerning our state by nature and how

God takes us up and produces out of such material His Masterpiece. The first ten verses of this chapter give us this story. They contain one of the richest portions of the whole Word of God.

The first verse tells us that we are by nature in the state of death—"dead in trespasses and sins." Man is dead spiritually; he is dead towards God (John v:24–25). This fact that the unregenerated man is dead is much denied in our days. We hear of "the better self", or "the good spark" which is in everybody, and the truth God has revealed concerning man, that he is dead in trespasses and sins is but little believed. The next verse states the walk of the natural man.

It fully shows the awful place in which man is as dead in trespasses and sins. The walk is according to his fallen nature; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life are the governing principles of this walk. We are enemies of God by wicked works. And behind all there stands the Prince of the power of the air, Satan. He works in the children of disobedience, which here means the Jews. Of this our Lord spake when He said, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John viii:44). And again it is written, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. (1 John iii:8). It is a solemn truth, which God has revealed concerning our condition as fallen beings, that we are in the grasp of the Prince of the power of the air; that man is under this mighty being of darkness. To what a place of degradation man has been brought by sin! This likewise is disbelieved by the great majority of professing Christians. A personal devil is ridiculed and his existence denied.

In the third verse another description is added, "children of wrath." The "you" of the first verse is addressed to the Ephesians, showing what they were in their former condition. The "we" in the third verse means the Jews "among whom *we* also had our conversation." The Apostle shows that the Jews were in the same condition; and he adds "and were by nature the children of wrath, even as

others." Jews and Gentiles are dead in trespasses and sins, are the enemies of God and children of wrath. And this truth is also increasingly denied. The Word of God is most positive, and tells us "that he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii:36). The denial of a future, conscious and eternal punishment of the wicked is becoming wide-spread; it is one of the marks of latter day cults like Christian Science, Russelism, the New Theology, Spiritism and others. But the believer who knows the Gospel and knows that he is "saved by grace" does not deny the truth of these first three verses of this chapter. It is our true photograph. Such material, God has to produce out of it His great Masterwork.

After this dark picture of death, ruin and wrath, we read what God has done and does, for all who believe on His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. "But God who is rich in mercy, for the great love, wherewith He loved us" (verse 4). This is the blessed bridge, which leads out of the dark and dreary, hopeless condition. *But God!* Man is guilty and lost. But God! God now comes in and makes known the riches of His mercy. Yet a righteous, holy God cannot be rich in mercy unless His righteousness is fully met and maintained. His mercy must have for a foundation His righteousness. And this is blessedly the case. He is rich in mercy for the great love wherewith He loved us. He gave His only begotten Son. He made Him who knew no sin, sin for us. He made full atonement on the cross and now God can be rich in mercy. And what does He do with such as we are? Verses 5–6 tell the blessed story.

These verses in which we read of the believer's quickening, his resurrection with Christ and being seated in Christ in the heavenlies, takes us back to the time when our blessed Saviour Lord was quickened and raised from the dead and seated in Glory. It is plain what God did for Him, who died on the Cross, He has done for all, who believe on His Son. Many Christians are ignorant of this great truth, while others have difficulty in grasping it. Yet it is quite

simple. Every Christian believes that when the Lord Jesus suffered on the Cross He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. With the Apostle Paul every believer is entitled to say in looking back to the Cross, "He loved Me, He gave Himself for me." We know all our sins were paid for by Him; all the punishment we deserved fell upon Him, our substitute. In Him we died. All this happened when we were not in existence at all. The sins He bore were not yet committed. God knew all about us and all about our sins and shame, the punishment we deserved, and His ever-blessed Son took all upon Himself. In the same sense God hath quickened us with Christ, raised us up and seated us in Him, when He did this for His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. This is simple, yet so wonderful and deep, that it is incomprehensible. It was all done for us, who believe, when it was done for Him. God in His marvellous counsels in redemption has associated us with Christ. He has made all, who believe on Him, sharers of His life and nature; He brings them into the same relationship as sons, and finally into the same Glory and inheritance. Let us bear in mind that all this was done for us in Christ. He is the first One who was quickened, raised up and exalted in Glory, and associated with Him are all His members; we share it with Him.

And all this becomes our blessed portion by faith in Jesus Christ. As we believe on Him, we are quickened, that is, we receive life, even eternal life and are saved by Grace. Then we are risen with Him. We are now in Him, risen from the dead, the Sons of God. Likewise in Christ (not with Christ) we are seated in the heavenly places. Now it is "in Him"; when He comes again we shall be "with Him" and share His glory. Here we have the summit of Christian position. We are not alone representatively, but also virtually seated in Christ in the highest glory.

It is worth the while to review in a brief word the blessed revelations given in the first six verses of this chapter.

We saw first what man is by nature. Dead in trespasses and sins. Enemies of God under the Prince of the power

of the air; this is the result of such a condition. Children of wrath, because we are dead, His enemies and linked with Satan.

And now God has come in with His mighty Power in the production of His Masterwork. He gives life so that the dead condition is ended. Instead of enemies, we are constituted, by the resurrection of His Son, beloved sons of Himself. And in Christ Jesus, He makes of us children of Glory, instead of children of wrath. Marvellous Masterwork of God! May we praise Him for it all.

But one must ask in view of such riches of Grace, as revealed in the preceding verses, What is the purpose of all this? The verse which follows gives the answer. We find ourselves face to face with the destiny of His Masterpiece.

"That in the ages to come He might show (or display) the exceeding (surpassing) riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus" (verse 7). This is one of the richest and deepest statements in the Bible. Two ages follow the present age. The millennial age, and after that has lasted for a thousand years, the eternal state begins. In the coming age and in all eternity, God is going to make known His glory through and in His Masterwork. All His redeemed will be with Him in glory. When He comes again He brings many sons to glory; and we shall reign and rule with Him over the earth.

But this is not all. In the eternal age, from eternity to eternity, God is continuing in this. He will bring forth something new in Glory, new riches of Himself for those who are one with His well beloved Son. From eternity to eternity He displays the surpassing riches of His Grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. How one is overwhelmed in the presence of such a statement! And how little after all we can understand all those coming riches in Glory. What a destiny! The heart may well cry—nothing but Glory! What is the little suffering, the little while down here, in comparison with such never ending Glory!

Fittingly this great revelation ends with the blessed statement that we are saved by grace through faith, and

that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; and that we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

3. The Mystery Made Known.

CHAPTERS II:11–III:21.

1. The Condition of the Gentiles. 11–12.
2. But now in Christ Jesus. 13–18.
3. The new and great Relationship. 19–22.
4. The Mystery made known and Paul's Ministry. iii:1–13.
5. The Prayer. 14–19.
6. The Doxology. 20–21.

With the eleventh verse of the second chapter we reach a new division in this Epistle. The great mystery of the Masterwork of God, the church, is next revealed by the Holy Spirit. We saw in the first chapter of this wonderful Epistle how God planned His Masterpiece. Then we learned in the first ten verses of the second chapter how God deals with us individually and fashions lost sinners, who trust in Christ, into His Masterwork. And now we are led higher, and the fact is made known that all believers are united into one body. This truth was briefly mentioned at the close of the preceding chapter (i:22, 23).

First, the condition of the Gentiles, the uncircumcision, as called by the Jews, is briefly described. They were without Christ; aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; strangers from the covenants; and without Hope and without God. Such was the condition of the great Gentile world.

Well may we remember in the dreadful days of apostasy, which are upon us, that Gentiles, who have had the Gospel preached unto them, are turning once more from the light, yea, from God's best. Christendom in denying Christ is rapidly waning, and must eventually plunge into a greater darkness than the darkness of the Gentile world before the cross. Without Christ, without hope, and without God! Fearful and solemn words these are! When Christ is given up, His Deity and His Blood rejected, when men deliber-

ately turn away from Him, and deny His Person and His Glory, they rush into the outer and eternal darkness "without hope and without God."

But now Christ being preached and believed in, Gentiles who were once far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. The little word "now" is of importance.

This present dispensation of Grace in which He makes known the mystery, which in other ages was not made known, that the Gentiles, once without Christ and without God, should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, is the "*now*" in which the surpassing riches of God's Grace are made known. *Now*, after Israel rejected the King and the Saviour, *now*, when He is upon the Father's throne, *now*, when the Holy Spirit is on earth to do His appointed work, *now*, during the present age, God makes fully known what He had planned before the foundation of the world. He is producing His Masterwork, taking the material from Israel, and reaching out with His mighty power after the Gentiles, to put them into one body. The poor, miserable, naked beggar upon the dunghill, the Gentile, is taken up to sit among princes and inherit the throne of Glory.

And all who believe are made nigh by the Blood of Christ. Then we find three statements in verses 14 and 15: 1. He is our peace, making of both one. The parties mentioned here as made one are Jews and Gentiles. 2. Broken down the middle wall and abolished the law of commandments. Between these two there stood a middle wall of partition, which separated them. This wall is the law. God Himself had put it up. But now in the cross of Christ, God has broken down this middle wall and made an end of the enmity which existed between Jews and Gentiles. And the law of commandments and ordinances finds its end in the cross. 3. Making in Himself one new man.

Jews and Gentiles, believing, trusting in Christ, made nigh by His blood, are made both one and constitute one new man. This is what God has accomplished, taking believing Jews and believing Gentiles, gathering them into one. This is the Masterwork of God, He does during this

age. When the Kingdom age comes the Jews will receive their place of blessing and glory in their land, and the Gentiles will be greatly blessed and enjoy righteousness and peace. Both Jews and Gentiles will be in the Kingdom then, but not as *one body*. In the present age a body is forming "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all (Col. ii:11). This new man is the church, and Christ is the Head of that new man. Grace flowing from the cross of Christ, where peace was made in the blood, takes up Jews and Gentiles and makes them one. When our Lord prayed in His high priestly prayer "that they may all be one as we are one," He must have thought of this great truth, now fully revealed in this Epistle by the Spirit of God.

In verse 16 we have two similar statements as in the preceding verses: 1. Both (Jews and Gentiles believing) reconciled unto God in one body. 2. The enmity slain by the cross. And furthermore He came and preached peace to both, to those afar off (Gentiles) and to those that were nigh (the Jews). Then follows the blessed result. "For through Him we both (believing Jews and Gentiles) have access by one Spirit unto the Father." The Jew did not know anything in Old Testament times about "access unto the Father." He had a tabernacle and the way into the Holiest was not yet made known. And the Gentile was without God altogether. But now believing Jews and Gentiles belong to the family of God, indwelt by the same Spirit, the Spirit of Sonship.

In verse 19 we hear of the new relationship into which believing Gentiles are brought in Christ. "Now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God." In verse 20 the church comes into view, and we hear that Gentiles saved by grace and made nigh by blood "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone." The church is compared to a building.

In the Old Testament God had a building in which He manifested His presence and His Glory. The tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple of Solomon were shadows of the church, which God is now building. The foundation upon which the church as the house is built, we find mentioned first. One of the common mistakes concerning the foundation upon which the church is built, is that, which claims that the foundation are the prophets of the Old Testament. According to this view the Old Testament Saints belonged to the church, and the church itself was therefore in existence throughout the previous dispensations. This view is often based upon the words we have under consideration, that the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Now if the prophets were mentioned before the apostles, there might be a possibility that the prophets of the Old Testament are meant. But it says "apostles and prophets." They are the New Testament apostles and prophets. Chapter iii:5 gives positive evidence on this whole question. The church is called a mystery "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

"Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" does not mean that the apostles are the foundation. The apostles are the foundation through their inspired teachings as Paul wrote, "I have laid the foundation." But he also adds "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. iii:9–11). The Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine of Christ is the foundation. This the apostles taught. And the Lord Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone (Isa. xxviii:16; Psalm cxviii:22; Matt. xxi:24; Acts iv:11; 1 Peter ii:4–5). "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord" (verse 21). The building, the true church is fitly framed together, which means that God puts it together in His own marvellous way.

Solomon's temple gives a little illustration of this. When that temple was building, hammer, axe and tools of iron

were not heard. "And the house, when it was building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was building." Every stone was prepared beforehand and fitted into the place where it belonged. How beautifully it illustrates the fitting together of the house, His church! He chooses and prepares the material and puts each in its proper place (1 Cor. xii). What a contrast with man's methods in trying to increase "church-membership!" The divine revelation is forgotten. Christendom has departed from the faith in these revelations concerning the one church and its architect. But all the confusion, the wrong conceptions and attending evils, cannot frustrate the purposes of the Lord. He is building His church. He takes the material and puts it as living stones in the place where it belongs. This is the work of His Spirit.

And the Holy Spirit dwells there. He dwells in the true church, because He indwells every individual member of the body of Christ. We are the habitation of God. As He dwelt of old in the tabernacle, so He dwells in the church through the Spirit. God does no longer dwell in an earthly house. The conception of a church building being a "holy place" which we must call "the house of the Lord" or "a temple" is absolutely wrong. It is the Jewish idea. God does no longer dwell in an earthly house and yet He has His habitation here. Wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is in the midst; that is a church and the habitation of God through the Spirit. "Even now in the state of imperfection, by the Spirit dwelling in the hearts of believers, that God has His habitation in the church; and then when the growth and increase of that church shall be completed, it will be still in and by the Holy Spirit fully penetrating and possessing the whole glorified church, that the Father will dwell in it forever."*

In the first verse of the *third* chapter Paul speaks of himself as "the prisoner of the Jesus Christ, for you Gentiles."

*Dean Alford—Greek N. T.

He became a prisoner on account of the Gentiles, when on his last visit to Jerusalem (Acts xxii:21–22). And to him was made known the mystery which was hidden in other generations. And the mystery is "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel."

That Gentiles should be fellow-heirs with Jewish believers in a distinct body is a new revelation. The Old Testament abounds in promises for the Gentile nations. These promises speak of righteousness and peace, which the nations of the earth are to enjoy. But they all stand connected with the age which is yet to come. That age is introduced by the visible manifestation of the Lord. At that time the people Israel will receive the place of headship among the nations. The Gentiles will join themselves to Israel, and Israel has the promise that the nations will seek the light and glory revealed in their midst. "And the nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee. Thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then shalt thou see, and be filled with delight; and thine heart shall thrill, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the nations shall come unto thee" (Isa. lx:3–5).

Many other passages could be quoted, but in not one of them is it said that Gentiles should be joint-heirs. In this mystery of the church there is revealed an inheritance which is far greater than any blessing promised to earthly Israel during the coming kingdom. Both, believing Jews and Gentiles are joint-heirs of Christ, and in the coming day of glory they will reign and rule with Him.

Then "of the same body" joint-members. The believing Jews on the day of Pentecost were formed into one body by the Holy Spirit. They became then one spirit with the Lord, and that marvellous organism, the body of Christ, had its beginning. Gentiles are joint-members of the same body; they are united with all the saints in one body. And

therefore believing Gentiles are joint-partakers of His promises in Christ by the Gospel. These promises do not concern the earth, but they concern the glory to come. Israel's promises will be fulfilled, and they will be under Christ as King, when He comes to reign. But the body of Christ has far greater promises in Christ. The body will be joined to the head, share the glory of the head and be where the head is. The Head, Christ, and the Body, the Church, composed of believing Jews and Gentiles, joint-heirs, joint-members, joint-partakers—this is the mystery.

And of all this the Apostle Paul was the minister. Beautiful words, "Unto me, whom are less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." The great revelation had made him very humble.

He might have made much of his superior knowledge, of the great revelation given to him, and he might have paraded a kind of an official pride as the Apostle to the Gentiles. But the high calling, the mystery made known unto him, the blessed ministry given to him, produced far different results. It humbled him into the dust before God. It could not be otherwise. Grace, such wondrous grace, as revealed through Paul, reaching down to such as we are, lifting so high with such an unspeakable calling and destiny, will ever humble us into the dust to give Him the glory. Grace necessitates this. The more we know of the blessed mystery of God's Masterpiece, the less we shall think of ourselves and delight to take the lowest place. Truth learned or knowledge gained in spiritual things, which does not humble us and make us think less and less of ourselves, is a dangerous thing. Truth, must ever break us down and lead into self-judgment and self-abasement.

The purpose of preaching the mystery concerning the church (verse 9–13) is twofold: 1. To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery; to make it known among men. 2. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. The heavenly

hosts look on (1 Cor. xi:10) and behold by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

That which no prophet ever saw, what no human being could have imagined, what no angel ever knew, what was known alone to God, took place. The church, the body of Christ, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all, began on earth with the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. They see how this body is being built, fitly framed together, and they know the glory which awaits that body. Therefore *now* is made known unto angels by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

And because the angels possess this knowledge, they rejoice over one repenting sinner (Luke xv:7). They know what it means to the sinner, and more so to Christ, when another member is added to His body. Nor must we lose sight of another statement. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. i:14). We do not know how they minister to our need, but we know they do minister.

The second Prayer in this epistle (verses 14–21) is addressed to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The petitions of the prayer are five: 1. To be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. 2. That Christ may dwell in your heart. 3. To comprehend with all Saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height. 4. To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. 5. To be filled with all the fullness of God. The Holy Spirit who gave this prayer wants God's people to know more of Christ, to feed on Him and by knowing the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, to be filled unto all the fullness of God. Think of the dimensions of this love! We are to comprehend with all the Saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height. But who can know all this? It will take eternity to comprehend it all. Look at the outstretched arms of the blessed One on the Cross! Here we behold the breadth. "Come unto Me all"—that is the breadth of His love. The length is from eternity to eternity. The first chapter told us of the fact that before the foundation of the world He

thought of us. He loved us before we ever existed. His love has no beginning and no end. It is an eternal love with which He loveth us.

And the depth! How deep, oh! how deep did He go down! The manger? The boyhood days in Nazareth? The manhood when He had not where to lay His head? The life that spent and was spent? Ah! the depths are far deeper. Let the hours of darkness give the answer, when He descended into the deep, dark waters of judgment and God's face was hidden from Him. Shall we ever know the depths of His love?

The height takes us into the Heaven of heavens. Look into an opened heaven! See the Glory-light! Behold there on that throne, there sits, not an angel, but a man! "We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." And into that Glory He has taken us. His love could never stop short of that. Where He is there the objects of His love shall ever be with Him. "The Glory Thou hast given me I have given them." Oh! the breadth, the length, the depth, the height!

"To know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge." We are to know something which passeth knowledge. It is a paradox. We know that love, and the more we know it the more it passeth our knowledge. Shall we ever know fully the love that passeth knowledge? This ever must be our blessed occupation to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. And what are the consequences? "That ye may be filled unto (not with) all the fullness of God." In the measure in which we know the love of Christ and comprehend the dimensions of this love, in the measure in which we have Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith and are rooted and grounded in love, in that measure shall we be filled unto all the fullness of God.

The blessed doxology ends this wonderful section of God's highest revelation. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the

church, in Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen." What assurance and what encouragement to pray. Let us ask much in spiritual things and He will do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

II. THE PRACTICAL MANIFESTATION IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER.

Chapters iv–vi.

1. Walking worthy of the Calling.

CHAPTER IV:1–6.

1. The walk in Lowliness and Meekness. 1–2.
2. Keeping the Unity of the Spirit. 3–6.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called." This marks the beginning of the second part of the epistle. It is obvious then, to walk worthy as a Christian, one has to know the calling wherewith God has called us. This calling, as we have seen, is revealed in the first three chapters. The first exhortation is to walk "with all lowliness and meekness." He does not speak of doing some great work, or to seek special gifts and special power. Lowliness and meekness is to be manifested by the members of the body of Christ. These two words remind us of the Lord Jesus and the words which came from His blessed lips. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. xi:29). He who had laid His glory by, thus emptying Himself, lived down here in lowliness and meekness. And we are called to walk even as He walked (1 John ii:6). "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii:5). The Holy Spirit tells us then that the first thing in the walk of the believer is to manifest the lowliness and meekness of the Lord Jesus. Walking in meekness produces gentleness towards the brethren, the fellow-saints. And as we walk "with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love" we manifest prac-

tically that we are members of the one body. Love is to be the governing principle towards all the Saints of God.

In the second place we are to give "diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." We are not told to produce the unity of the Spirit, but to keep it. What is this unity of the Spirit? It is the unity which God in His infinite grace has made Himself. All believers are members of the body of Christ, the church. The Holy Spirit dwells in each and He has put us into that body as members; the one body, and believers members of that body constitutes the unity of the Spirit. We are to own it by keeping it in the bond of peace. This unity can never be destroyed for it is the work of God. But it may be denied and the expression of it completely lost. Alas! this is the common thing about us. Sectarianism is a denial of this unity of the Spirit. We keep the unity of the Spirit when we recognize in every true believer a member of Christ and of His body. What will enable us to keep this unity and thus walk worthy of our calling? We must constantly feed on the glorious realities of our redemption in Christ. What God has wrought for us and for all His Saints, the fact that all are indwelt by the same Spirit, and that all have the same glorious destiny, must never be lost sight of.

The Unity of the Spirit is revealed in verses 4–6. Again, the three persons of the Godhead are seen only in reverse order, the Holy Spirit first, the Son of God the second, and the God and Father third.

The Holy Spirit	1. One Body. 2. One Spirit. 3. One Hope.
The Son of God, the Lord	4. One Lord. 5. One Faith. 6. One Baptism.
The God and Father	7. One God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

The one body, which stands first, is the church, the body

of Christ. The fullness of Him that filleth all in all. The one Spirit is the Holy Spirit. He came on the day of Pentecost and the Baptism of the Spirit then took place, by which the body of Christ is formed. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. xii:13). The one hope is the hope of the church, to be with the Lord in glory, to be like Him and share His glory. The next three linked with the Lord and are likewise connected with the church. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, presents the aspect of public profession. The one Lord, is Christ; all Christians own Him professedly as Lord. The "one faith" is the faith in the Lord and the "one baptism" is water-baptism, which is both, the initiatory rite of Christian profession and an expression of that faith in the one Lord. And God is the "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all." Of course this applies only to believers.

2. The Ministry and Its Purpose.

CHAPTER IV:7–16.

1. Ministry according to the Measure of the Gift of Christ. 7–10.
2. The needed and permanent gifts. 11.
3. The Purpose and the Goal. 12–16.

Each member in the body of Christ has a specific place for a specific work. See Romans xii:4–5 and 1 Cor. xii:4–5. And the bestowal of gifts for service in the body is in His hands. He ascended upon high and triumphed over all enemies. He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. He triumphed over the devil, who has the power of death and stripped him of that power. And all who constitute His body share in His triumph. They are no longer under the power of Satan, but delivered from the power of darkness, they are His trophies. "He led captivity captive," *i. e.*, those who were in captivity, or "a troop, a multitude of captives." The view held by some that the Old Testament Saints are meant, whom He led forth from Hades is incorrect.

Psalm lxviii is quoted. But we discover an omission.

Psalm lxviii:18 reads, "Thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." The last sentence is omitted, for the rebellious are the Jews; they are as the rebellious nation not in view in Ephesians, though the day will come when Israel will be converted and the promised gifts will be bestowed upon that nation. And He who ascended also descended first into the lower parts of the earth. It means the deepest depths of suffering, the shameful death of the cross and that He was buried.* As the ascended One He has given gifts for the ministry in the body. These gifts are "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers." Other gifts are mentioned in First Corinthians such as the gift of healing, the gift of tongues, etc. These were not permanent gifts, and not absolutely necessary for the perfecting of the Saints and the building up of the body of Christ. The gifts mentioned here in Ephesians abide to the end until the church is complete and removed from the earth. The Apostles are the Apostles of the beginning. The apostolate of Mormonism and similar cults is an invention. Nowhere does it say that Paul, Peter or John should have successors; all who lay claim to the title of apostle in the church are deceivers (Rev. ii:2). The doctrines of the Apostles are in our possession as the supreme gifts of the exalted Lord to His body. New Testament prophets are such who speak the message of God for the comfort and exhortation of God's people. The evangelist preaches the gospel. The pastor and teacher are practically one. The teacher expounds the Word and teaches the doctrines of the Bible. And these gifts remain till the Lord comes for His Saints. The gifts are for the perfecting of the Saints, unto the work of the ministry for the building up of the body of Christ. And each gift is not for a certain part of the church, but for the whole body. "Till we all come unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the

*This passage has nothing to do with 1 Peter iii:18. The meaning of this Scripture will be fully explained in our annotations of the first Epistle of Peter.

Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." This measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ will be reached when the body is joined to the Head. When the church enters into His presence and He presents the church to Himself (Eph. v:26), then this completion has come. Till then He will give the gifts to the church, His body, for the upbuilding of that body. And He puts this body together and ministers unto its needs (verse 16).

3. The Walk in Holiness and Righteousness.

CHAPTERS IV:17–V:21.

1. Not as the Gentiles walk. 17–19.
2. The Putting off and Putting on. 20–32.
3. Followers of God. v:1–2.
4. Exhortations. 3–21.

At this point the exhortations to walk in separation begin. The "therefore" of verse 17 refers us to the "wherefore" of chapter ii:11–12. What Gentiles are in their natural condition is here once more put before us. The grace of God takes the believer out of these conditions and puts power on our side to walk "no longer as the Gentiles walk." And how solemn is the description of what Gentiles are by nature! Nor must we overlook the fact, that beneath the thin veneer of our boasted civilization, which rejects Christ and the gospel, there is the same darkened understanding, the same alienation from God, the same blindness and the uncleanness of which these words speak.

Saved by grace these Gentiles had heard Christ and had been taught by Him. To walk according as the truth is in Jesus is the responsibility of all who know and follow Him. He is our pattern. The old man is put off and the new man is put on. We are not told to put off the old man by all kinds of endeavors and resolutions; it is already done. The old man was put away by the cross of Christ (Rom. vi:6). This is the blessed truth which delivers from doubt and bondage. And then we receive something in Christ, the

new man, the new nature. Grace unclothed us and clothed us. Grace made an end of the old man and put upon us the new man. And this new man after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, which calls for a corresponding walk. But there is also a practical putting off and putting on. Of this we read in verses 25–29. In verse 26 there is a command to be angry and sin not. There is a righteous anger which is not sinful. The Lord Jesus exhibited that (Mark iii:5). When truth is perverted, or that blessed and worthy name is dishonored, a righteous feeling of displeasure arises in the heart, which is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Such a feeling is not sin. But we are warned "let not the sun go down upon your wrath." The wrath of man, if nourished, worketh not the righteousness of God (Jas. i:20). How easy it is to harbor feelings which are sinful, and in doing so give place to the devil. Corrupt communications are not to proceed out of the mouth of a member of the body of Christ, "but that which is good for needful building up, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Speech is always to be with grace, seasoned with salt (Col. iv:6). In view of such exhortations, the practice of certain evangelists to use "slang," vulgar and common expressions in public speech stands condemned.

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye have been sealed unto the day of redemption." We are His temple and all must be avoided which displeases the holy guest. That He dwells in us and we are sealed by Him is the evidence of our eternal security. We are sealed by Him unto the day of redemption. We may grieve Him, but He will never leave those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb. He abides with us forever. In verse 32 we find another exhortation how the members of the body of Christ should act towards each other.

We are to be imitators of God, as dear children and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. Then there are additional exhortations about fornication, all uncleanness, or covetousness, as well as other

things. It shows the possibility of a child of God falling into these things. The true believer knows that in his flesh dwelleth no good thing, and that only the power of the Holy Spirit can deliver him from the power of the flesh; therefore he walks in the Spirit. There can be no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God for such whose life is in these things. A child of God may fall and commit some of these things, but no true believer will continue to live in them.

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (v:11). When our Lord was on earth He reproved the unfruitful works of darkness. His condemnation was aimed at the religious Pharisees and rationalistic Sadducees. He pronounced His solemn "woes" upon them. Walking as the children of light, therefore, means separation from evil, moral and religious, and a definite witness against it.

The exhortation in verse 14, to awake and arise, is not addressed to an unsaved person, but to a Christian. Many believers are in the state of spiritual sleep among the spiritually dead in the world; but the promise is given, that Christ will give light when the awakening comes. Another important exhortation is found in verse 18: "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." "Be filled with the Spirit" does not mean another outpouring of the Holy Spirit, another Pentecost. The Holy Spirit dwells in every child of God; He is the abiding guest. He is in us to fill us, and He will do so if we walk in the Spirit. May we open our whole heart to Him and walk in obedience, abiding in Christ, occupied with Christ, exalting Christ, and we shall know what it means to be filled with the Spirit. Some of the effects of it are mentioned in the verses which follow (verse 19–21). There is worship and thanksgiving. He is also the Spirit of love and grace—"submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

4. Manifestation in the Family-relationship.

CHAPTERS V:22–VI:4.

1. Wives representative of the Church. 22–24.
2. Husbands representative of Christ. 25–29.
3. The Mystery: Concerning Christ and the Church. 30–33.
4. Exhortations to Children and Parents. vi:1–4.

The exhortations which follow concern the Christian family. The mystery concerning Christ and the church (verse 32) is to be manifested in the family relationship. While before we have seen the church as the body of Christ, here in these verses we see the church in her love-relation to Christ. He loved the church and gave Himself for it. The union of husband and wife is used as a type of the union of Christ and the church. Wives are mentioned first: "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." And why? For the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the church; and "He is saviour of the body." The wife is therefore to be in submission to her own husband in everything, as the church is subject unto Christ. Thus the wife in her submission is to bear witness to the blessed relationship of Christ and the church. She has the blessed portion of being in subjection. The question arises, What, if the husband is not a believer? Is she to submit in such a case? The Word of God gives definite instruction covering such a case, and adds a promise (See 1 Peter iii:1–2).

The husband is not to demand of the wife this submission, which is her place. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. He stands in the Christian family as the representative of Christ and is called to love his wife. And how did Christ love the church? He came from heaven's glory to be a servant. He served and is serving the church. The husband's love towards the wife is to be expressed in loving service in her behalf and giving unto her, as unto the weaker vessel (1 Peter iii:7). Not the wife is to serve the husband, but the husband is to serve her in love, thus manifesting in a little measure the love of Christ

for the church. Beautiful is the description of the love of Christ for the church. It is a love in the past: "He loved the church and gave Himself for it." Thus there is a present love: "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." Then there is His future love: "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." It is the love which passeth knowledge, the love which never changeth; the love which is eternal. Equally blessed is the truth contained in verses 30–33. We are members of His body, and of His flesh and His bones.

That we have here a reference to Adam and Eve as the types of Christ and the church is obvious. While Adam slept God built the woman out of his side and then presented her to him. "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," were Adam's words. She was taken out of his body, shared the same life and was also Adam's wife. Adam is the figure of Him that was to come (Rom. v:14). Eve is the type of the church. We possess His life and are of Himself, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. And the church's destiny is to have dominion with Him over the new creation.

Children are to obey their parents in the Lord. And the fathers are not to provoke the children to wrath, "but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." And how much wisdom this takes! Parents must show constantly to the children the love and patience of Christ and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Then the promise will be made good. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts xvi:31).

5. Exhortations to Servants and Masters.

CHAPTER VI:5–9.

The servants exhorted were slaves. Slavery existed throughout the Roman Empire at that time. Nowhere is

slavery attacked in the New Testament, nor is there a statement telling believers that it was a sin to own slaves and incompatible with the gospel. Paul wrote a courteous letter to Philemon and sent it by Onesimus, the runaway slave, who probably had stolen money from Philemon, his master. The Gospel is not here to reform the world, to meddle with social conditions and politics.

The slaves here exhorted were Christians. They all belonged to the one body where there is neither Greek nor Jew, bond nor free. They were in Christ, saved by grace and seated in Christ in the heavenly places. What did it matter if they were but slaves! Did not God's well beloved Son walk on this earth as a servant, yea, the servant of all! In all their bonds they were the servants of Christ. Their service was to be rendered as unto the Lord and not unto men. The Lord would give them their reward. How happy these believing slaves must have been! And the Christian masters were to remember the one Master in Heaven, with whom there is no respect of persons.

6. The Warfare and the Panoply of God.

CHAPTER VI:10-20.

1. The Warfare, 10-12.
2. The Panoply of God, 13-20.

Christian warfare or conflict is with the devil and his wiles, with the principalities, the powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and with the spiritual armies of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

This revelation given here concerning the powers of darkness, the principalities, the rulers of the darkness of this world and the wicked spirits in the heavenly places, is important and demands a closer attention. The Scriptures clearly teach that there is a vast dominion of darkness over which Satan is the head and that, as the god of this present age, he has rulers over this world and a large army of wicked spirits in the heavenlies. He is the prince of the power in

*Literal translation.

the air. The sphere above the earth, the aerial heavens and beyond are tenanted by these wicked spirits, which under the headship of Satan form with principalities and powers, his kingdom. How mighty this being is, what powers are at his disposal how vast his dominion, how numerous the fallen angels, the wicked spirits which possess the heavenly places, no saint has ever fully realized, nor can it be all known, till the day comes in which the God of peace shall bruise Satan completely under our feet. Satan has even access into heaven itself. The first two chapters of the book of Job acquaint us with this fact. See also 1 Kings xxii:19–23. But a day is coming when the old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, will be cast out into the earth and his angels with him. This will happen according to the Apocalypse (Rev. xii;),when the saints of God are taken into glory and Michael begins his great war against Satan. Then the heavenlies will be cleared of their wicked and unlawful occupants. They will be forced to the earth, where Satan for a brief period will exhibit his great wrath and institute the great tribulation. The devil and his angels will finally be cast into the lake of fire prepared for them (Matt. xxv:41). All this we know from God's revelation, and it is a solemn revelation. In our days the masses of professing Christendom are wholly indifferent to these truths. Others openly oppose them, sneer at them and reject them as superstitions. Well has it been said, "No one but an unbeliever can overlook and despise them?" Behind all these denials and sneers, coming from the camps of Higher Criticism and the new theology stands the dark shadow of Satan. The rulers of darkness of this world, the wicked spirits, do all in their power to keep a lost world, with its supposed progress and scientific discoveries, in ignorance and darkness about themselves. And Occultism, known by the names of Spiritualism and Psychical research, tries to establish communion with departed spirits. In reality it is communion with the wicked spirits in the heavenlies, who use this unlawful intrusion to delude their victims and make them doubly secure for the impending doom.

And these wicked spirits are against the Masterpiece of God. Those who are in Christ and lay hold in the power of His Spirit of the great and ever blessed truths revealed in this epistle, who know the hope of His calling, who rejoice in God and the Glory to come, who walk worthy of the calling, come face to face with these powers of darkness. They hate us as they hate Christ.

The wiles of the devil, not his power, we are exhorted to stand against. His wiles are all aimed at getting us away from the enjoyment of the fellowship into which God has called us, the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. If he succeeds in that he has dislodged us from our stronghold and then is able to attack us. The world over which he rules is at his disposal and he uses it to accomplish his sinister purpose. Many pages could be written on his tactics and not the half would be told. It is not so much by the gross things of the flesh and the world he works, though he also uses them; error of all descriptions becoming more subtle and more cunning, are the chiefest wiles of this great being and the wicked spirits under his control. And how well he succeeds in our present time!

And we must put on the whole armor of God, the panoply of God. It is the only way that we can get the victory and stand and withstand. First, **the loins are to be girt about with truth.** Even so our Lord exhorted, "Let your loins be girded about" (Luke xii:35).

It is the girdle around the loins, which holds all things together. The girdle is the Truth. What truth? The truth of heavenly things, heavenly blessings, acceptance in Christ, Oneness with Him, the truth so fully revealed in this epistle. This we need as a girdle to hold up our garments, our habits, so that in the warfare and conflict we may not be entangled with the affairs of this life (2 Tim. ii:4). The Truth is to govern our conduct, our affections.

The breastplate of righteousness. This covers the heart. It means having a good conscience. Not merely knowing that we are the righteousness of God in Christ, that we are righteous because we believe on Him, but it means a con-

sistent walk with our position in Christ and the relationship into which the Grace of God has brought us. It is again the walk, worthy of our vocation, obedience to the exhortations of the preceding chapters. Covered by this the devil cannot touch us. Such practical righteousness "love out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned" keeps us in the realization and enjoyment of our relationship to God, in the fellowship with the Father and the Son. How often we fail in having on the breastplate of righteousness. Then we must seek restoration by confessing our sins (1 John i).

The feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. This does not mean the preaching of the Gospel to others, Christian service or soul winning. We have through the Gospel perfect peace with God. We know that God is for us, who then can be against us? This perfect peace we have, in which we stand is our preparation. And we have the peace of God as well, yea, the legacy our Lord left unto us, "My peace I give unto you." Therefore are we not terrified by our adversaries (Phil. i:28). Israel wandered over the desert rocks and desert sands for forty years with shoes, which did not wear out. We too wander through the wilderness, the feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace, a peace which will last as long as God Himself. Knowing this Peace, knowing we are in God's hands, knowing that we are Christ's and Christ is God's, knowing that all things are ours, we can stand and withstand the wiles of the devil. He cannot touch one who rests in the peace of God and who trusts in the God of peace.

The Shield of Faith. This is to be "over all."† Faith in God, faith in His promises, faith in His Word, simple child-like faith is to cover the head and the body like a great shield. It is the exercise of an unwavering confidence in God. The fiery darts will thus be quenched. These "fiery darts" are indeed terrible weapons. The fire speaks of the wrath of God, of judgment, at least, from Him, and it is with this that the enemy would assail us. He is, we must

†Not "above all" as in the authorized version.

remember, the accuser. His aim, as already said, is to bring distance in some sense between our souls and God. How great a necessity, therefore, to maintain this happy confidence in Him, which, while it does not excuse failure in the least, yet, in utter weakness, finds all its confidence in Him who has undertaken for us. "All the fiery darts of the wicked one" can thus be "quenched" by the "shield of faith."*

The Helmet of Salvation. The helmet rests upon the head. It covers the head, the seat of intelligence. Assurance of salvation past, present and future is this helmet. As we wear it and as it governs our mind and heart as well, the wiles of the devil cannot fall upon us. We are in possession of a salvation which is secure. No power in earth or heaven the devil with all his demon powers cannot spoil us of it. This gives not alone confidence, but boldness in the conflict. Sad it is to see the thousands of believers without the helmet of salvation, destitute of the assurance of salvation and therefore the easy prey of the devil's wiles, driven about by every wind of doctrine. Well has it been said: "Girded by the Truth applies to the judgment of the inner man. Practical righteousness guards the conscience from the assaults of the enemy; the power of peace gives a character to our walk; confidence in the love of God quenches the poisoned arrows of doubt; the assurance of salvation gives us boldness to go onward."

The Sword of the Spirit. It is the Word of God, the only offensive weapon mentioned in the armor of God. It is to meet the devil and to make him flee from us. How our blessed Lord wielded this sword in the wilderness, how He met the devil by a "It is written" is well known to every Christian. Was there ever a time when God's people had greater need of laying hold with a firm grasp of the Sword of the Spirit? Satan has succeeded by his wiles to dull the edge of that sword. The enemy also perverts and counterfeits the Word. What need then that as never before we go "to the law and to the testimonies." We must search the Word and have the Word search us. We must have the

*F. W. Grant.

Word in our heart and our heart in the Word, and thus alone can we meet the enemy.

Praying always. We do not detach this from the armor of God. It belongs to it. Prayer always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, is next to the sword of the Spirit the most powerful weapon against the devil and his wicked hosts. We must read the Word and pray. Prayer and the Word cannot be separated. The searching of the Word must be done with prayer and prayer will be effectual through knowing the Word. Prayer is dependence on God; we lean on Him. And as we pray in the Spirit (not for the Spirit) we are to watch also and remember all the Saints of God, the blessed members of the body of Christ, the Masterpiece of God.

7. The Conclusions.

CHAPTER VI:21–24.

In the preceding verses the great apostle asked the prayers of the saints for himself. Thereby he testified in a practical way to the great truth of the body of Christ, the church. The conclusions are brief. Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in Christ, would make known to them all things, and he was sent also by the loving apostle to comfort their hearts. What a marvellous document this epistle is! What a solid rock to stand upon! What revelations concerning God, and ourselves as redeemed by the blood of His Son! God grant that all His people may increasingly enjoy the riches of this richest portion of His Holy Word.

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